

Lanark County
INTERVAL HOUSE
and Community Support

2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT

HONOURING 45 YEARS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LANARK COUNTY



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Erin accepts LCIHCS' Community Builder of the Year award presented by the United Way of Eastern Ontario, November 2023

A Word From Our **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** Erin Lee

It has been another year of hard work across the agency. Housing shortage, length of stay, human trafficking needs, community-based pressures mounting post covid, have all kept the agency current and busy.

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 and the onset of the National Action Plan to end GBV.

Opportunities have been consistent as we explore new partnerships, approaches and the launch of the rural roots work with NFF.

Our amazing staff team worked tirelessly to change the landscape for women and kids through service delivery, groups, and tenacious advocacy. Our Board grew in capacity as the agency continues to evolve and the AGAN store remained a central pillar of our work with a new refresh and the launching of the Suit Yourself program. Our community, third party events, generous donors, and our dedicated volunteers keep us embraced and protected as a needed service provider.

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

The numbers of incidents remain high, the epidemic is ongoing and the lens with which we do the work remains rooted in equity, justice and SINICI! We all have a responsibility to act when we see it, name it and change it.

As a local leader who experienced significant loss and was absent for the end of this fiscal year, I commend the leadership of Tess Powter, Jennifer Greaves and Brianne Luckasavitch and the team approach employed by the entire LCIHCS team.

As we head into our 45th year of service, we remember those taken, thank those pioneers who built our foundation, and appreciate those who persevere with vision toward the future.

With gratitude,

Erin Lee

A Word From Our
**CO-CHAIRS OF THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

Judith Haddad and Candace Roberts

Evolution, change, and growth.

This year at LCIHCS has been one of change, evolution, and growth. The Board of Directors was privileged to witness and support the achievements and challenges experienced this year while also envisioning the future of our organization.

LCIHCS continues to demonstrate an unwavering commitment to providing a safe haven and supportive environment for women and children fleeing domestic violence in Lanark County. Despite facing numerous challenges, the dedicated team has continued to deliver exceptional services and support, embodying the core values of compassion, resilience, and empowerment. What a year it has been!

Due to unforeseen events, the Board was asked to approve the addition of the post of Interim Executive Director to the list of staff positions. We were pleased to approve the creation of said post and subsequently approve the appointment of Tess Powter to the role of Interim Executive Director. For staff, volunteers, and board members, the changeover went smoothly as the shelter maintained its' mandate throughout an unforeseen absence.

Through the efforts of Talent by Design and the thorough evaluation of staff positions and job descriptions, the Board recognized where change was needed in the managerial division of LCIHCS. The decision to provide extra support to the management team was made in order to allow the team to perform to maximum capacity.

The Board of Directors recognized the need to reinforce and increase their own numbers and positions. The Governance committee conducted a widespread recruitment drive. They were successful in that an incredible number of applications were received, highlighting the interest in the work of LCIHCS from the community. Through the interview process, they were able to generate a list of potential Board members.

Changes in the regulations governing non-profits necessitated the review of our own by-laws. Small changes were necessary to ensure that our own by-laws conformed to the regulations. Board member Linsey Sherman-Zekulin will present a brief overview of the changes to the by-laws at the Annual General Meeting.

Human Trafficking reared its' dreadful head and LCIHCS was there to provide shelter and support. Kudos to our staff who went above and beyond to ensure the safety of women who sought assistance. This incident brought to the fore the need for ongoing staff training in order to truly benefit all.

Advocacy and political action remain very important aspects of board involvement. Given the rise in the number of incidents reported, it is obvious that more needs to be done to ensure that women are safe in their own homes and on the streets.

While we are often reminded of the many challenges associated with this work, we also reflect on our many successes, largely due to the steadfast dedication of our Executive Director(s) and the exceptional staff at LCIHCS. We extend our gratitude to the women who generously serve on the Board of Directors, committing their time and expertise. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to you, our members and supporters. Your presence here tonight signifies your ongoing commitment to the values and mission of LCIHCS, and for this, we are deeply grateful.

The members of the Board of Directors of LCIHCS will continue to do their utmost to support staff, volunteers, and clients in the coming years.

In solidarity and friendship,

Judith Haddad and Candace Roberts

Co-Chairs 2023-2024



Co-Chair Candace Roberts represents LCIHCS at Pride 2023 with Executive Director Erin Lee, Finance Manager Jennifer Greaves and community partner Sara Milligan of Shelter Movers



Board Chair Judith Haddad, Communications & Volunteer Coordinator Emma Kinsman and employees from Lanark County at the Warden's Golf Tournament in Support of LCIHCS, August 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LCIHCS continues to be afforded the opportunity to have great women in leadership on its Board of Directors. We strive to maintain a broad range of knowledge, skills and experience on the LCIHCS Board. The following represents the current members of the Board of Directors for the 2023-2024 fiscal year:

- Candace Roberts, Co-Chair**
- Judith Haddad, Co-Chair**
- Cara Gibbons, Treasurer**
- Laurie Weir, Secretary**
- Linsey Sherman-Zekulin**
- Christine Walterhouse**
- Kristine von Bloedau**

Since September 2022, Judith Haddad and Candace Roberts have represented the agency as our Board Co-Chairs with Linsey Sherman-Zekulin acting as Past Chair. Last fiscal year, LCIHCS was actively seeking references or recommendations to fill open positions with a recruitment campaign. We were fortunate enough to find two candidates who were elected to the board this fiscal year: Laurie Weir joined in September 2023 and Kristine von Bloedau in January 2024.

This year, no board members are stepping down. We would like to propose for election Linsey Sherman-Zekulin and Christine Walterhouse as Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors with Judith Haddad to act as past chair. We would like to propose Diane Strickland and Kelly Blair be elected as members of the board.



Co-Chair Judith Haddad with Suit Yourself Coordinator Sue Barkley at the Grand Unveiling celebration for the Suit Yourself Program, September 2023



Board Members Cara Gibbons (Treasurer), Co-Chair Judith Haddad and Christine Walterhouse (Chair of Governance Committee) with Executive Director Erin Lee at Violet Femmes, November 2023



Finance Manager Jennifer Greaves, Past-Chair Linsey Sherman-Zekulin, Co-Chair Candace Roberts, Victim Advocate Brienne Lucasavitch, Executive Director Erin Lee and Residential Manager Jean Rogers host a visit from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, June 2023

UPDATES ON THE RENFREW COUNTY INQUEST



LCIHCS played an active role in the Renfrew Inquest, and we continue to lead local discussions and implementation strategies of the 86 jury recommendations. In June of 2022, the inquest into the 2015 femicides of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam began in Renfrew County.

Thirty expert witnesses, including our Executive Director Erin Lee, gave testimony. The jurors called upon the Ontario Government to improve with 86 recommendations to prevent Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

Recommendation #1 states IPV should be declared an epidemic. Thanks to the tireless advocacy work and strong community relations fostered by our Executive Director, on December 14, 2022 **Lanark County became the first county in Canada** to pass a historic resolution in accordance with the first jury recommendation presented by the Renfrew County Inquest. The resolution was unanimously passed and history was made! By the end of our last fiscal year, five other municipalities had passed their own resolutions declaring IPV an epidemic. **Now, nearly 100 municipalities across the province** have joined us in declaring IPV an epidemic, though the Province still refuses to make the declaration.

Parties involved in the Renfrew County Inquest met in Pembroke in June 2023 to acknowledge one year since the Jury Recommendations were released. We partnered with What Now Lanark County to provide a bus for community members to attend the event. Staff and other folks attended the meeting with encouraging signs, a much needed positive spot on an otherwise solemn day as Ontario finally responded to the rest of the Jury Recommendations.



Many of the recommendations were rejected. Most that were accepted are things the province already does that are, simply, not enough. Despite the provincial rejection of the Declaration of Intimate Partner Violence as an epidemic, Toronto made the declaration on July 21. In August, The federal government described gender based violence as “an epidemic” in its formal response to a coroner’s inquest. Justice Minister Arif Virani said the government is committed to ending the gender-based violence epidemic “in all its forms, and is working to address any gaps in the Criminal Code to ensure a robust justice system response.” We remain hopeful of the province’s declaration.

In January, Mississippi Mills Mayor Christa Lowry chaired a session at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Conference on IPV/GBV; the first time this issue has been discussed on a large municipal stage.

Mayor Lowry was joined by our Victim Advocate Brianne Luckasavitch and speaker and lawyer Pamela Cross of Luke's Place. The goal of the session was to send home community leaders from across the province with tools and resources in their pockets to become allies, partners and to take action. There was a great turnout from Mississippi Mills and Lanark County colleagues at the session. The panelists informed and motivated attendees, as community leaders, to be part of the solution and make our communities safer for everyone.



Victim Advocate Brianne Luckasavitch, Mayor Christa Lowry and lawyer and advocate Pamela Cross present at ROMA



Erin Lee with Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow

LCIHCS remains committed to educating community members about IPV and the Inquest Recommendations. Each week, Erin meets with Bob Perrault of Lake 88 radio to discuss one of the Inquest Recommendations in detail. LCIHCS will continue to work with other groups to put pressure on the province to declare IPV an epidemic and to take the other recommendations seriously. We remain hopeful.

On March 28, the perpetrator of the femicide of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam died in custody of natural causes. It is our sincere hope that this can bring peace to many families who are still healing from the infliction of horrid violence and the harm that he caused to many. In the end we need to remain focused on the recommendations from the inquest that resulted from this triple femicide event and work to ending IPV in Ontario and beyond. We want to honour and focus on the lives of those who were taken and those who were hurt and will continue to work on enacting the recommendations and moving them forward so we can avoid more news and more information about the unfortunate epidemic of violence happening across the province and our country.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Every year, we are blessed to be situated in an engaged and generous community like Lanark County. This past year was no exception. We continued to work to foster strong community bonds, create new partnerships, and get community members involved with our mission to end gender-based violence. Our community showed up to support us at events in person and online, with generous donations throughout the year, especially during the Holidays, and by purchasing our new LCIHCS merchandise! It is great to see community members out and about in their "See It, Name It, Change It" gear.

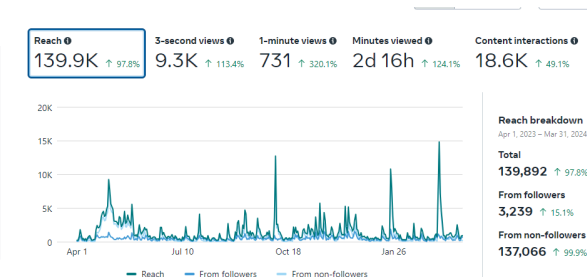
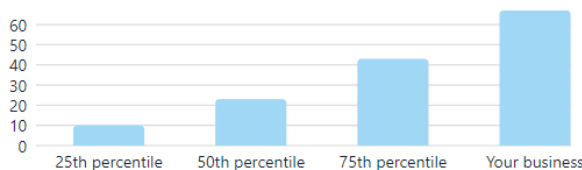
This year, we had several successful community events, including our Take Back the Night March, Violet Femmes Gala, Smiths Falls mosaic unveiling with ReDefine Arts, two December 6th Vigils, and a wonderful and well-received 16 Days of Activism Campaign. This included two National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women Vigils, a survivor talk with local best-selling author Margaret Carson, and more.

As always, we kept our activism visible and accessible to community members. We hung our "We Stand With Survivors" banner in Smiths Falls for the month of May, Sexual Assault Prevention Month and worked with the What Now Lanark County group to bring a busload of supporters to Pembroke in honor of the one-year anniversary of the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations in June.



We were honored to be one of the recipients of the United Way East Ontario Community Builder of the Year Award. This is the highest honor bestowed by the United Way. This year, the award honored LCIHCS and three other VAW agencies for our work to end violence, for making the work visible and for making it easier for women, gender-diverse people, and their families to seek help when they need it.

Our online communications remain well-received. Our total reach on Facebook is up 97.8% this year, with content interactions up 49.17%. Our total number of followers also grew by 28.7%. In 2023, Instagram content interactions are up 100% with profile visits up 27.7%. This year, Meta offers a new Insight to users with a Business Comparison. LCIHCS performs well beyond the 75th percentile on both Facebook and Instagram meaning that we perform better than other comparable non-profits.



PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public Education is one of the most effective prevention tools that we have in the fight against violence. When we know better, we do better. We need to continue to offer information, options, support and safety to those who are stuck in the cycle of violence as we know that this is the only way to break free from it. The prevention work that we do in our community and schools is well recognized after years of knocking on doors and asking to be let in. We continue to respond to the many requests in our rural community and beyond. This past year, the Public Education program has prioritized the political aspect of the work to push for change at higher levels; specifically within our Justice System and with our Political leaders. We welcome survivors to the table and believe that they are the experts of their experience. It is with survivors and victims that we learn the most about prevention and best practices of intervention. Our See It Name It Change It campaign proves to be an important campaign of change in the Lanark County community and beyond.

The LCIHCS Public Education Program received one time funding from the Victim Support Grant to increase the capacity of our public education program to address increasing numbers of requests from schools for training on a wide range of topics related to IPV, and support the increase of our presence in our local schools. LCIHCS worked with our community partners to establish focus areas and key messages and set targets for providing the education pieces. These messages include how to seek support, warning signs of IPV, community and bystander engagement and support using a rural context.

This year we were able to offer a unique Public Education opportunity to the community and local high schools with two performances of Love Bomb the Musical. This production delves into the intimate and courageous exploration of human trafficking, an issue more prevalent in Canada than you might realize, and provides education on healthy relationships and the signs of love bombing.

In the summer, we welcomed a delegation from Mexico and the Department of Justice to discuss the issues of stalking and IPV and share a little bit about how we address those issues at LCIHCS. We had wonderful conversations and fruitful discussions (thank you to our two fantastic interpreters!) and enjoyed forming new connections and friendships with the group.

Earlier this year, we launched a Rural Roots campaign in partnership with Neighbours, Friends and Family & Luke's Place. This program will equip individuals with knowledge and tools to support survivors in a way that is specific to rural communities.

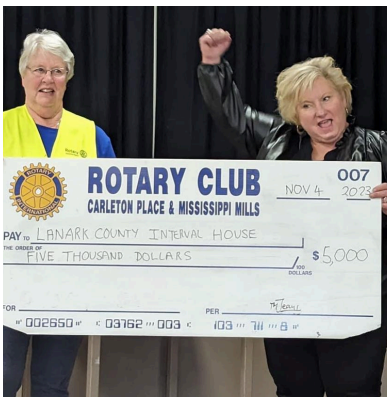


A GROUP OF LOCAL STUDENTS JOINS THE CAST OF LOVE BOMB THE MUSICAL AFTER AN AMAZING PERFORMANCE! SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



RISING PHEONIX'S MOTORCYCLE
SCAVENGER HUNT EVENT



CATHIE MCORMOND CHEERS AS A
CHEQUE OF \$5,000 IS PRESENTED TO
LCIHCS BY THE ROTARY CLUB

As a registered charity, several of our programs do not receive government funding and are therefore sustained through fundraising initiatives. Resource Development creatively maintains and seeks new opportunities to generate revenue and other resources to ensure short and long term financial success for the agency. This is primarily achieved through fundraising campaigns and events and grant writing, with time spent researching for new grants and recruiting new donors. Resource Development supports all LCIHCS programs and the needs of our shelter and external clients when required.

The post pandemic era brought about unprecedented challenges during the fiscal year, leading to a decrease in the number of donors and financial difficulties for many individuals and organizations. As more not-for-profits started seeking grants, it became crucial to proactively explore new funding opportunities to ensure a steady flow of support. By adapting to these circumstances and actively searching for alternative sources of funding, we successfully overcame the unique challenges of this fiscal year. Competition for local funds has grown with nonprofit organizations finding themselves in a competition for funds. Building personal connections with donors remained a challenge even after the pandemic.

There will be ongoing challenges to the resource development program as we face higher competition for funds. Securing donations has become more challenging as the demand for support continues to rise. Shift in donor priorities, donor engagement, rising costs, fatigue, and retention are major concerns for nonprofits. Adapting to changing donor preferences and priorities is a daily challenge to maintain our support base.

The resurgence of in-person events was very helpful in overcoming these challenges, with several notable fundraising initiatives and events taking place. Awareness presentations were given to several local groups and businesses which resulted in successful third-party fundraisers and support. Additionally, plans were initiated for the inaugural annual golf tournament coming in 2024. Community events like the Carleton Place Chamber breakfast networking events and visits to the Farmer's Market played a crucial role in creating everyday support for our agency from the community.

Highlights of the year included the first annual motorcycle scavenger hunt fundraiser for LCIHCS, organized by Rising Phoenix, a bake sale on Bridge Street in front of the As Good As New store, and support from Carleton Place Rona who organized a fundraiser with a BBQ, draws and more! The Wardens Golf Tournament was a fantastic event that brought together golf enthusiasts for a day of fun, dinner, and prizes. The tournament also resulted in a generous donation. The Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills Rotary Club Women's Fair, an annual event, presented LCIH with a \$5000 donation in 2023. The Jackson Homes Ball tournament, now in its second year, was another memorable day filled with excitement. The tournament raised \$11,000 for LCIH, making a substantial impact, the Remax Walk, an annual event, saw the staff of our local Remax Affiliates Realty Ltd. hiking along the Beckwith Trail for a cause.

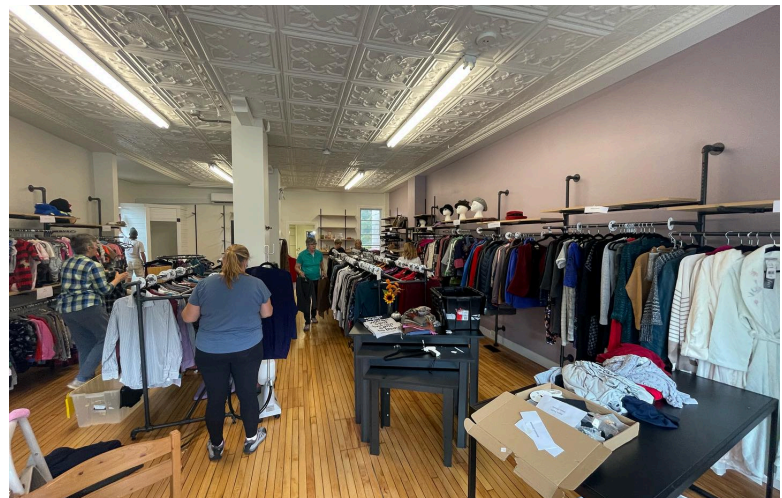
Lastly, The 15th Annual Violet Femmes Gala had an incredible result this year, selling out in just one week and raising nearly \$50,000. These events not only helped to raise funds for the organization but created awareness and provided public education. Support from grants and securing the support from the County of Lanark are vital for our agency. Third party fundraisers and ongoing donations from groups like St. Paul's Church, Starbucks Carleton Place, Mitchel's Independent, a local egg farmer, The German Bakery and Food Smiths makes a huge difference to us.

AS GOOD AS NEW THRIFT STORE

In its 43rd year, the As Good As New store stands as a testament to the power of feminism, community, and sustainability. Run by over 40 dedicated volunteers, the revenue from all the items donated supports both the shelter and LCIHCS programs. In today's challenging economic times we are proud to have kept our prices low, ensuring that everyone in our community can benefit.

In the past year alone, we estimate that we received over 3,750 bags of clothing and small housewares, reflecting the generous spirit of our donors. The challenging economy and the growing interest in thrifting has helped us achieve an 8% increase in sales over the previous year. Whenever possible we re-donate to our community partners and are proud to be a green business, keeping as much as possible out of landfill.

In August 2023, we temporarily closed the store for a three-week refresh. Thanks to a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we were able to sand and refinish the floors, repaint our walls and install brand new fixtures. To honour the heritage of our building, we incorporated steam pipes fixtures, reminiscent of 1920s garment districts. This refresh not only enhanced the shopping experience but also enhanced the As Good As New stores rich herstory and connection to our community.



Top Left: New fixtures being brought in!

Top Right: Volunteers hard at work to get the store looking great before the grand re-opening

Bottom: Staff and Volunteers check out the new space!

SUIT YOURSELF PROGRAM

Launched in September 2023, The Suit Yourself program is designed to empower women as they prepare to rejoin the workforce. The program was made possible with funding from an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant.

The program offers our clients support in building a resume and job interview preparation. Another component of the program is one-on-one styling sessions. The sessions assist our clients to start to build a work wardrobe. Sustainability and the environment are important to the program, and we work hand in hand with the As Good As New store to source professional attire from our donations. The focus of the styling sessions is to start building a small capsule wardrobe, focusing on timeless versus trendy pieces and choosing items that can be mixed and matched to create multiple outfits.

The Suit Yourself program is client directed and it is our goal to always meet women where they are at. Sometimes that means we pivot and instead of providing an outfit for a job interview, we may support a client getting ready for the courtroom. Knowing that you have clothing suitable for that day can help provide dignity and boost self-confidence.

“ I will be forever grateful for the "Suit Yourself Program". The program helped **inspire me, gave me the confidence** I was so in need of, created an amazing resume for me and **filled me with hope for my future**. This experience has been **life-altering** in the most positive way.

I feel so blessed to have been introduced to this program, and **I'm convinced that women who are helped to see themselves in a different light**, to love themselves for who they are, to finally get the encouragement and compassion that was so lacking in their life situations, **are empowered to be the beautiful soul they were meant to be.** ”

SUIT YOURSELF CLIENT

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The volunteer sector in Canada has experienced significant challenges over the past few years. According to a report published in February 2023, the pandemic had a profound impact on volunteerism. Fifty-nine percent of charities reported major loss of volunteers with 57% facing difficulty in recruiting volunteers. The Ontario Nonprofit Network's (ONN) "2023 Realities for ON's Nonprofit Sector" highlighted further challenges. Demand for services is at an all-time high, and nonprofit financial situations are deteriorating, while at the same time two-thirds of the sector are experiencing staffing challenges, particularly around recruitment and retention.

Despite the challenging external environment, our volunteer program has shown remarkable resilience and growth. This fiscal year, **31 new volunteers joined our team**, 3 volunteers retired or took a break,

43%

Increase in our Volunteer Team, for a **total of 126%** growth over the last two years.

and 3 new high school students joined us. Our volunteer team now comprises of 97 individuals, plus 5 high school students and 8 Board members, **totaling 110 volunteers**.

This marks a second consecutive year of record growth in our volunteer team, contrasting sharply with national trends. Last fiscal year, we welcomed thirty new volunteers, and this year saw a **43% increase in our volunteer team, following an 83% increase the previous year**. Our volunteers contributed approximately 7,000 hours annually. This remarkable effort translates to over \$210,000 in savings for our agency annually, highlighting the true cost of running our agency and the incredible impact volunteers have in keeping our programs and services operating.

We cannot overstate the importance of our volunteers. Their dedication and hard work are vital to our mission, and we deeply appreciate their contributions. No matter how they contribute to the agency, they make a big difference. This year, we celebrated our volunteers with three appreciation events, including parties in April and December and a tea party in January. These events allowed us to express our gratitude and get to know the incredible individuals who support us.

We are immensely proud of our volunteer team and their unwavering commitment. Their efforts make everything we do possible, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your incredible support!



2023-2024 SHELTER STATISTICS



34 WOMEN

Stayed in the shelter

32 CHILDREN

Stayed in the shelter

338 DAYS

Shelter was at or beyond full capacity,
up 47% from last year.

62 WOMEN

Died by Femicide in Ontario, **up 19%** from
last year.

2802

Crisis Calls

98 DAYS

Average length of stay

RESIDENTIAL SHELTER PROGRAM

LCIHCS Residential Program provides safety, resources, and support to women and children fleeing abuse. The shelter has 15 beds and one emergency bedroom. Counselling staff also answer a 24 hour crisis line. Both services are available every day of the year on a 24 hour basis.

The Residential program has been challenged with hiring and training various new staff. Many thanks to the 'seasoned' staff who took the new staff under their wings and coached them through the steep learning curve of starting a new position. Substance use, concurrent disorders, mental health needs, and self harm, coupled with continued difficulty obtaining mental health supports remain a consistent area of concern for our residents.

Sex trafficking has become more apparent in our area, and we have women who have found safety in our shelter. There are many levels of complexity dealing with sex trafficking: the resident's fear of her abuser, his threats to her wellbeing and to her family; her desire not to participate in a police investigation for fear of retaliation; the possibility of staff being ordered to testify in court or share confidential information; the need to file missing persons reports if the resident does not return to the shelter; the involvement of substance use as a means of control. Nevertheless, our shelter remains a place of safety and security for the woman where she can work on healing and finding her strengths.

We find that affordable housing remains one of the most significant barriers for our families. As a result, it is not unusual for women/families to stay with us for over 6 months. This is in comparison to 10 years ago when most women were able to find housing within the initial 12 week period of their stay at the shelter. Private market rent has soared so that even with subsidies women find they cannot afford to rent. There is a longer wait for subsidized housing even when on a priority list.

We are very fortunate to have wonderful community support for our agency. We have individuals who drop off donations, amongst them parents who have encouraged their child, as a means of developing their social awareness, to save money or purchase products for our residents; people who donate to us in memory of someone they have loved and lost; people who have experienced abuse in their lives or in the lives of people close to them who want to give back. Knitting and quilting societies donate their work. There are many organizations who support our residents, including The Arnprior Angels, and the Basketeers of the Ottawa Region. Local churches are also kind donors. The list could continue for pages. We appreciate each and every one who thinks of our women and children and help their stay be a safe and comfortable one.

It is also with deep thanks that we acknowledge the constant dedication of our shelter volunteers: whether it is tidying up the basement, helping the crisis counsellors, or playing with the children, they are an integral part of running our service. We are so thankful for their continued support.

RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

16

Women served, **up 63%** from last fiscal year.

30

Children served, **up 20%** from last fiscal year.

The purpose of the children's program is to provide one on one and family counselling, programming, referrals and supports to meet each family's needs while also allowing for consistency in a communal living setting and supporting families in their journey. The program is focused on family healing, reconnection and growth for children and mothers after fleeing an intimate partner violence situation.

This past fiscal year, the program focused on the "Back to Basic's" approach, the goal being to refocus on the who, what and why of the program while still allowing for new experiences, community engagement and family outcomes. This approach aims to allow children's program staff to provide more one on one programming for children in the shelter, to tailor the approach based on the needs of the shelter and to focus on healing and support through the journey of each mother and child.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services provided funding to the program for the purchasing of new developmental enrichment focused toys, furniture and resources to provide a consistent, calm approach to the items available to the children in the shelter. This is entrenched in the "Back to Basic's" approach in focusing on enrichment, while allowing for healing and reconnection within the family .

An increased need for clarity around Duty to Report in the residential team was a challenge we faced this year. This was dealt with through many ongoing conversations, discussions and debriefing of scenarios and highlighting the importance of staff support and open communication with the women and children. An ongoing challenge we face was recognizing the need for a more structured approach to residential services offered while finding space to tailor each approach to the specific clients' needs. This balance highlights the need for consistency around topics such as confidentiality. The need for clarity in policies and procedures to allow for continuity through the residential team's approach to families in the shelter. This is ongoing as staffing changes occur.



The updated children's space in the shelter thanks to funding for furniture and enrichment toys provided by MCCSS

2023-2024 COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS 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.

500 WOMEN

Served in Total by CSP Programs.

66 CHILDREN

Served by CSP Programs

2013

Hours of Counselling Provided.
Up by 50 hours from last year.

1988

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 support groups for women have continued to be a highlight. This year we offered 10 groups in various locations in the county. This included, Breaking the Cycle, Assertiveness: Finding my Voice and Second Stage: Moving on from the Abuse. Groups are well attended and women who participate give very positive feedback.

In January, we were able to launch a new Women's Support Phone Group to help women over 50 overcome isolation. The group covered topics like self esteem, assertiveness, resources in the community and identifying abuse. The group had 5 regular participants who gave feedback that they really looked forward to the phone calls and they felt it helped break their isolation. The women have gone on to form their own peer support group. Because of the success of the program, we are considering running the program again in the winter months when isolation peaks for this group. Funding for this group was provided by Senior's Centre Without Walls Partnership Program.

The cost of rentals/housing and lack of housing is the biggest issue this last fiscal year. The ByName Priority list and LCIH Second Stage and Beyond Second Stage housing and the Shelter were utilized when appropriate. Our team provided ongoing support to women who could not leave partners as a result

229

WOMEN

Were served by the Women's Program this year. This includes women from the Lanark Highlands Outreach Program.



CHILD & YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Child & Youth Outreach Program provides support to children and youth ages 4-18 years of age that have been affected by domestic violence. The program provides individual counselling as well as child and youth groups. We offer a safe environment for children and youth to express their emotions and discover new coping skills, build self esteem & form healthy relationships.

40

Moms were served by the Child and Youth Program this year

63

Children & Youth were served by this program this year, **up 18.9%**.

We received some additional ministry funds for children's programming this year. These funds allowed children & youth in our community to be engaged in recreational activities and camps. This also helps the programs stay up to date with new resources as well as accessing art therapy sessions.

This year we definitely faced some complex cases. We strategized and gave the best support we could keeping with families needs & safety always at the forefront. Systemic challenges are on going how ever we continue to think outside the box and work collaboratively with our community partners. The continued bridge between the two children's program's within the agency has been very beneficial for our clients & staff. It works very well and will continue to be a positive for the families we support in the community.

It's been a busy year with many clients wanting service for longer period's of time. As an agency we supported many families over the holiday season with wonderful community support. 78 women, 112 kids & youth. 17 families were sponsored. That's 243 people that the community supported. This speaks to the cost of living and the extra stress this puts on families.



LCIHCS's Shelter Basement teeming with community Holiday donations



MTK U13 Hockey Team did a pajama drive



Volunteers Cheryl and Susan help unload a donation from R. Tait School

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Our purpose is to support women who have experienced sexual assault with counselling and community support.

This fiscal year, we were able to bring back into rotation the 'Healing Through Expressions' creative expression group created for survivors of sexual assault. The winter group ran for 8 weeks with 10 women. Many women expressed how much they appreciated the support they received and skills they built in the duration of the group.

This year was a hard one for many families economically. Many of the women who were supported in the sexual assault program also had significant financial barriers, inadequate housing, and food insecurity. These challenges posed barriers to moving forward with counselling and navigating trauma, as we spent significant time navigating basic needs and problem solving solutions on how to feel safe with our basic needs.

The perseverance pantry has been a great support for these struggles to assist with food insecurity. We have attempted to forge relationships with agencies and social services that offer housing options. As a program, we have stayed engaged in LCIHCS programs for housing as well, to allow more options for women to choose from while navigating their safety plan, moving on plan and healing. Our goal was to have more tools in my tool box to support women with sustainable and affordable housing, and food and financial security. This is beneficial for the women we support, as it allows for some safety in basic needs and there for more room for counselling and support on processing the trauma of their experience.

There was a significant increase in use of the programs in the sexual assault program. In the 2023/2024 fiscal year, the sexual assault program supported 65 women with counselling and community supports. The previous fiscal year recorded supporting 27 women. This is an increase of 38 woman who were able to be provided with supports through LCIHCS. This support would be in regards to counselling, community supports, groups and programming.

65

Women were served by
the Sexual Assault Support
Program this year



VICTIM ADVOCATE PROGRAM

In response to several domestic related murders in Lanark County and neighboring communities, LCIHCS in partnership with the Lanark County OPP, engaged survivors of domestic violence & sexual assault, to discuss their experience. We learned that victims of violence often have questions that are rarely answered, that a trauma informed approach is key and that we often lose victims in the gaps of service navigation. The Victim Advocate engages with victims from the incident onset to system navigation, and beyond to ensure that victims of violence are heard and supported throughout.

The Victim Advocate program was engaged to increase the capacity of our public education program to address increasing numbers of requests from schools for training on a wide range of topics related to consent, healthy relationships & family violence. We engaged with our partners to put on 2 local youth conferences with the focus being online safety and digitally informed youth.

Change is ongoing within our police and new recruits aren't always aware of the Victim Advocate program. We provide ongoing, updated training to police on the program and offer insight into the specific challenges that victims of this crime face in Lanark County beyond the charge. Mandatory charging, dual charging, and determining primary aggressor are all discussions that we continue to try and have with our police services. We need to continue to educate all systems on the cycle of violence and how our actions within our systems can do more harm than good. Impact vs intention. Victims have reported that disclosing to Police and entering the Justice System is a deterrent for them to report the violence they experience. This is another reason why they stay in violent relationships. The Victim Advocate program has been described as a link between victim and Police. This takes away some of the anxiety that disclosure may bring. It is important the we respond using a trauma informed, harm reduction approach.



151
Women and children were served by the Victim Advocate Program this year, up 75.5% from last year.

FAMILY COURT SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Family Court Support Program provides support to women who have experienced or are experiencing abuse. The FCSW supports women who are either looking for information or currently navigating Family Court. The FCSW will , accompany women to legal appointments and help with the application for legal aid. Women are also assisted with safety planning such as getting to and from court safely,

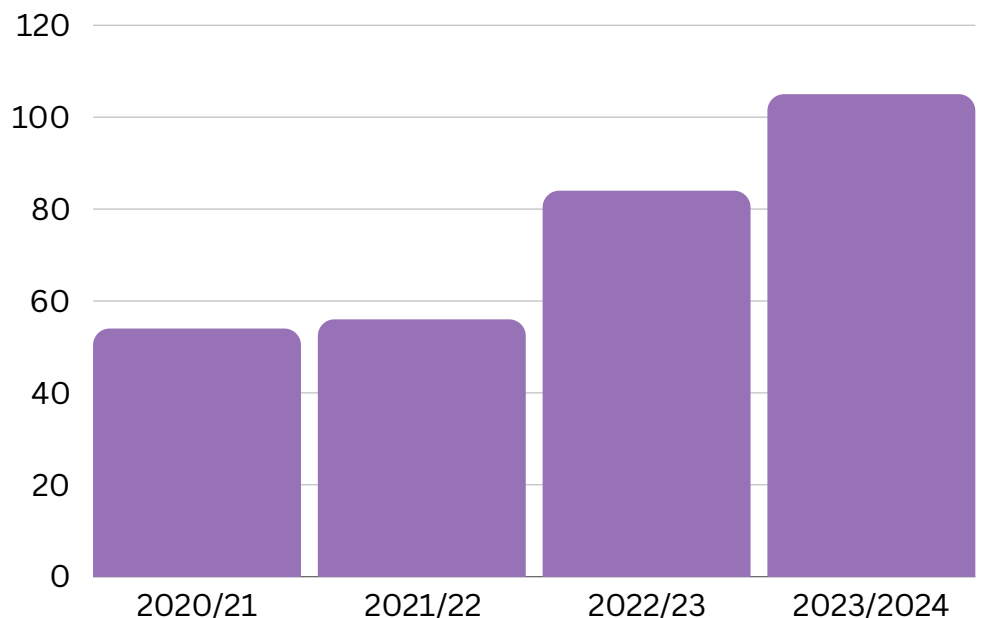
The MCCSS has allowed funding for increased hours for the second year. We are grateful that the ministry sees the need for this program in our community. We hope one day that the FCSW Program will be a fulltime core program with LCIHCS.

Each year there is a substantial increase in demand for FCSW services. Many women are ineligible for legal aid and lack the financial means to engage a private lawyer. Consequently, our workload has intensified by supporting women in document writing, preparing for court, navigating the court system, debriefing and safety planning.

Persistent issues surrounding the availability of legal aid lawyers continue to necessitate heightened legal support and client preparation. This is very concerning when these cases involve children and when the woman has concerns for the children's safety. We know that Family Court is not a quick process and without having a lawyer to help navigate the system, this can increase stress for the mother and children.

105

Women and children were served by the Family Court Support Program this year, **up 25% from last year.**



TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SUPPORT AND HOUSING PROGRAMS

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Transition Housing Support Program works to support women who are seeking or using residential programs. THSP assists women with support and resources to help navigate safely back into the community and to help maneuver the systems that they may be working with. THSP will continue to support the women (family) for three months after they have departed from residential services. This year there were some changes to the staffing of the program. The program works with the Health Unit and other resources for distribution, teaching and reporting of Naloxone.

31

Women were served by the THSP Program this year,

The program faced unique challenges this year with the length of women's stays at the shelter increasing over the years, and with the struggle to find safe affordable housing. The resources offered are varied and reflect the individual women's needs. Safety, advocacy and empowerment are key components of the THSP position. As in previous years the housing crisis is a huge barrier for women trying to move forward. The cost of rent and certain rental criteria continues to create issues for women. Women have had to move from their communities and children from their schools and friends in order to find suitable housing. THSP continues to offer support where needed through housing application completion, advocacy, transportation to view housing, and safety planning.

HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

The goal of the housing options provided by LCIHCS is to offer clients safe and affordable housing while they look for a permanent housing situation. One of the biggest benefits for many of our clients, is that our units come with a subsidy supported by LC Housing Corporation. They can receive this subsidy while they remain on the LC Housing Corporation waitlist for a housing offer, if they are qualified or are interested in that option for themselves.

This year we were able to start a bike share program for residents at our Second Stage building. We have two bikes that can be borrowed by residents as a mode of transportation. We hosted iSisters for two 16-week rounds of computer literacy courses for women in our housing programs. This program was very well received by the women who participated. We also made the decision to combine the multiple housing applications that we had, into one application. This made the process easier for clients and staff.

22

WOMEN

AND

THEIR 19

CHILDREN

Were served by the Housing Program this year.

A positive change was that we had a lot of turnover in the units because Lanark County Housing had the ability to make multiple housing offers to women who were on the special priority waitlist. Staff supported the coordinator to support women move on and have the units filled again with women in need of housing.

We continue to face ongoing challenges with housing. One of the biggest barriers to women accepting housing offers from LCIHCS is that we are unable to accommodate pets onsite. Pets show unconditional love to their owners, and it is very difficult for some women to be apart from their pets. Although we cannot change our policy, we meet women where they are at and support their choice to find other means of housing. We are working hard to maintain and upkeep the units. We now do quarterly inspections to ensure that our health and safety standards are being upheld and get to chat with the resident about their unit (ex. How things are working, any issues, etc.).

A heartfelt thanks to supporters like the Rotary Club of Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills, United Way East Ontario, RE/MAX Affiliates, Marquis Ltd. Brokerage, Lindsay Beauchamp and an anonymous doner who refurnished our freshly painted units, and Scotia Bank who provided information sessions for making our housing programs possible and meaningful for the women and their children we serve.



As of February 29, the county's by-name list (a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness in the community) indicated that 62 people were actively unhoused, up from 54 on January 31. These individuals were staying in an emergency funded motel, domestic violence shelter, or in public places on the night of the count. 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 with food and hygiene items as they recover from the pandemic and navigate the rising costs of goods and services. Registered clients can access the Pantry up to two times per month.

Items stocked in the Pantry differs from week to week depending on budget and donations. Currently we have a weekly budget of \$200 to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, and any other items that are needed to fill the cupboards that do not normally come in by donation.

We have solid community partnerships; Independent Grocer in Carleton Place, where we pick up a weekly meat, dairy and bakery donation, Eric & Christiana Gwin local farmers who donate 12-15 dozen eggs bi-weekly from spring to fall, Starbucks where we receive baked good and premade sandwiches, Mazon Canada, Jeff Julian -Desjardin Insurance agent, St. Paul's Church, and the Hunger Stop where we receive their surplus supplies.

Due to the large amount of frozen donations and the demand for these items from clients, another large stand-up freezer was purchased. This has allowed us to give more to our clients and has been a wonderful addition to the program. We also were able to utilize members of our volunteer team to bake for us when we had an abundance of ingredients, for example they made muffins and bread when we received a plethora of bananas.

Although we make accessing the Pantry as easy as possible for women, an obstacle we ran in to this year was ensuring all of our clients were able to pick up their donations. Initially, we had volunteers do deliveries twice a week to bridge the gap to those with transportation barriers. In February, LCIHCS hired a transportation coordinator. Having the Transportation Coordinator available to help with pantry orders has been such an effective way to support the Perseverance Pantry Program. Additionally, some Community Support staff pack pantry orders for their clients when leaving their counselling appointments, which works really well for some women.

The feedback that we have gotten from clients and staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Overall, the program has been running smoothly and we look forward to keeping the program going as long as funding is available.

400

Pantry Deliveries
were made this year.

192

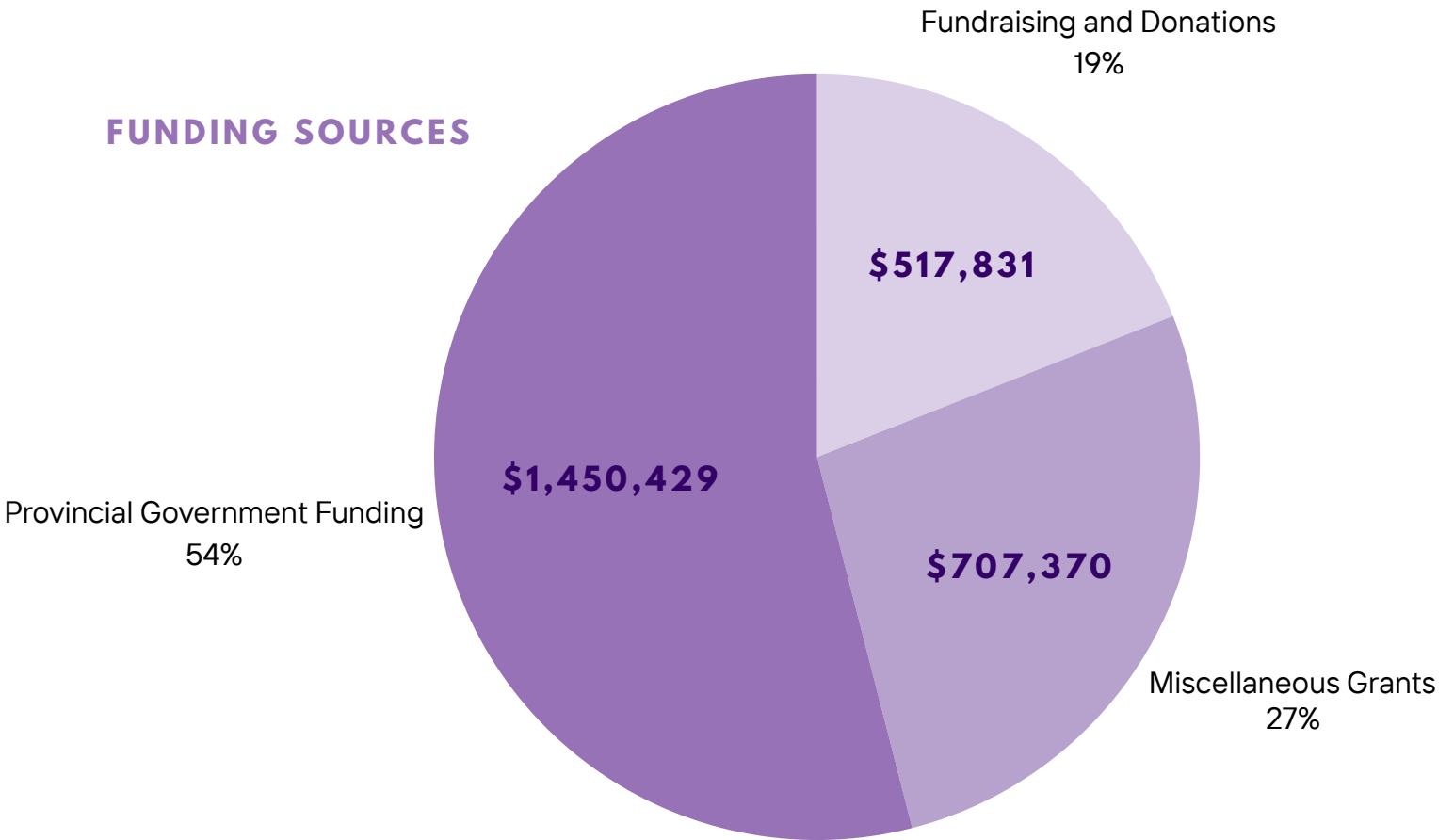
Women & Children Served
by the Perseverance Pantry this year, **up**
28% since last year respectively.

FINANCES

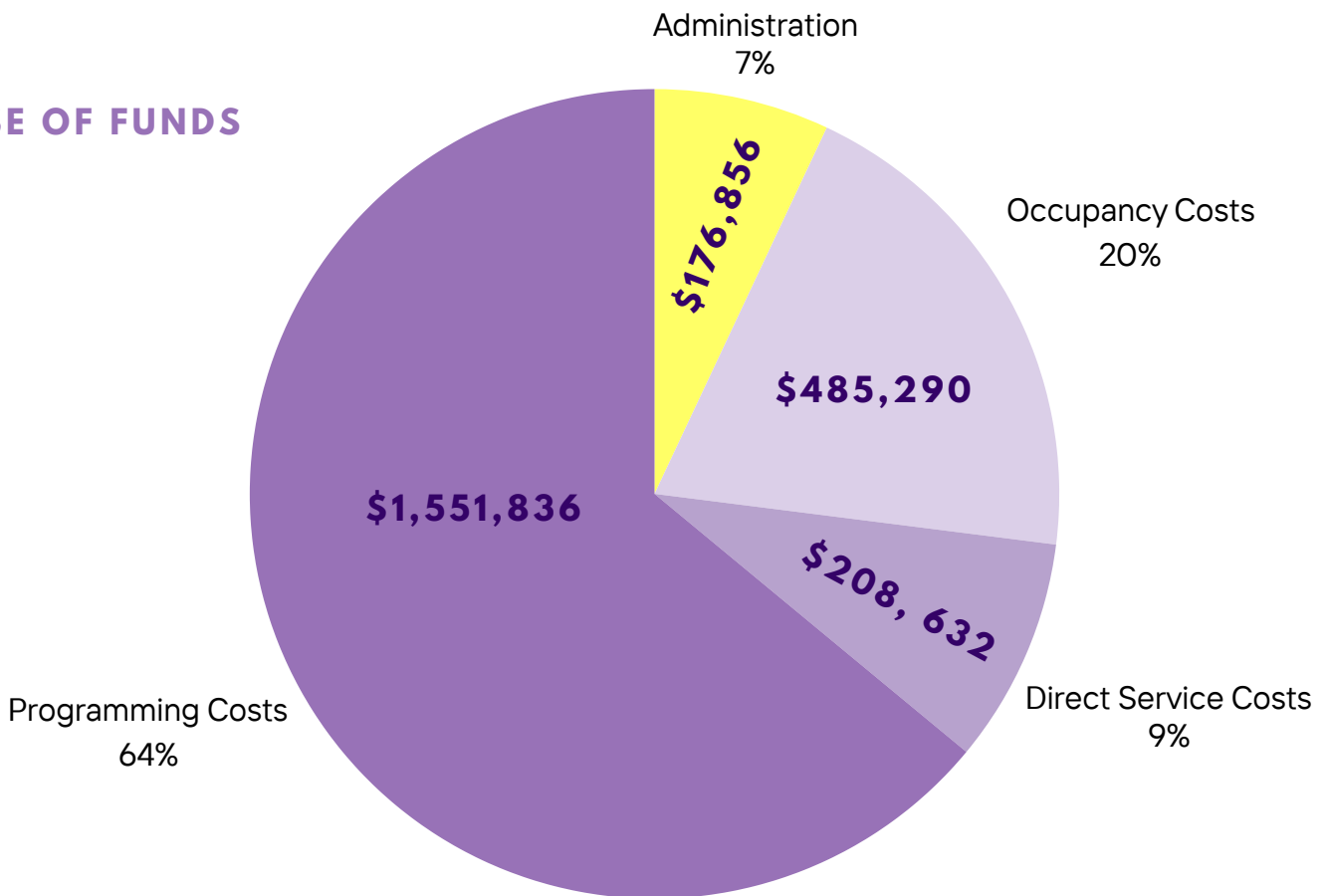
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

Revenue	2024	2023
Provincial Funding	\$1,450,429	\$1,298,940
Miscellaneous Grants	707,370	771,150
Fundraising and Donations	517,831	585,150
<i>Total Revenue</i>	2,675,630	2,655,240
Expenses		
Programming Costs	1,551,836	1,531,089
Direct Service Costs	208,632	188,306
Occupancy Costs	485,290	340,303
Administration	176,856	153,387
<i>Total Expenses</i>	2,422,614	2,213,085
<i>Net Surplus/Deficit</i>	253,016	442,155

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+)



& KAVCOR INC.

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



& BRENDA DERBYSHIRE

ALLIES IN THE FIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Almonte Civitan Club | Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario | Perth Lioness Club |
| Almonte Community Presbyterian Church | Grand Hotel Carleton Place | Scotiabank Carleton Place |
| Bean Motors | Jeff Julian Desjardin Insurance | Scotiabank Home Financing Solutions |
| Beauties of the Beast | Kiwanis Club of Perth-on-Tay | Scotiabank Perth |
| Canadian Tire Gas Bar Carleton Place | Lanark County Crime Stoppers | Scotiabank Smiths Falls |
| Carleton Place Civitan Club | Laura Keller Real Estate Team | Shelter Movers Ottawa |
| Carleton Place Royal Canadian Legion | Ottawa Basketeers | St. Andrew's Church Perth |
| Donna MacDonald Ottawa Mortgage Market – Mortgage Alliance | Perth Civitan Club | St. Paul's Church Almonte |

Wife-bashing as common in rural as in urban life

By Cliff Brimmell
Citizen correspondent

CARLETON PLACE — Behind the surface tranquility of rural life, big-city violence sometimes lurks.

"On farms you can scream as loud as you want and the neighbors won't hear," says Fern Martin, one of six volunteer workers at the local Interval House, a shelter for battered women and children.

The house is looking for close to \$40,000 in com-



Fern Martin

start battering their girlfriends."

Interval House is being used more and more as a rape crisis centre as well, says Millett.

"I'm amazed at how many women finally break down in the small hours of the morning and say: 'He only wants me sexually after he's hit me.'"

"That's something they just can't handle; the image of themselves is totally shattered."

Conditions at the house are cramped and the building is badly in-

Interval House shelter

A safe refuge from hunger and terror

may be those who doubt
Interval House
County - Sandra Boyd

Carleton Place shelter lacks funds, may close

By Henry Heald
JOURNAL REPORTER
CARLETON PLACE — Lanark County's only refuge for battered women and children may have to close unless it can raise some money in a hurry.

Beverly Watson, chairman of the board of Interval House, and board member, appeal for funds at press conference.

port is that the staff can't talk in detail about their clients or their work.

"It is an uncomfortable situation. People don't want to see people who have been battered."

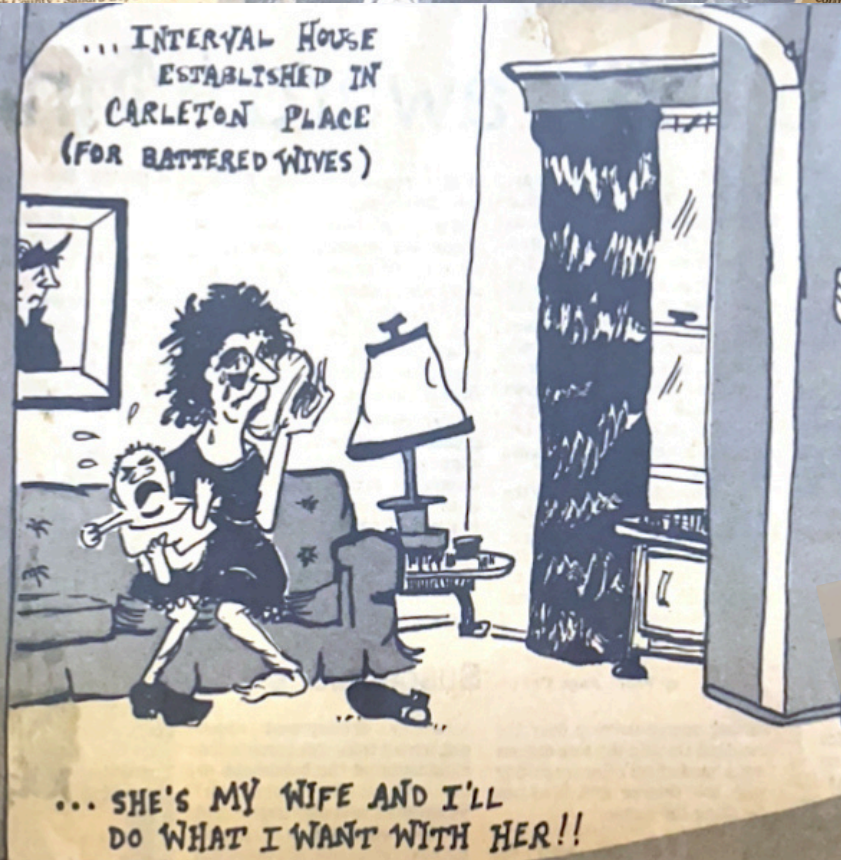
\$1,300 for the payroll, they certainly raise the \$45,000 purchase for the house.

son said the initial concern of residents and the town about the establishment of Interval House has dissipated.

oted by neighbours' and the neighbors," she

Place will be the site of a women and violence County on May 24.

t of Halifax, author of articles about battered the theme speaker.



Interval House in Carleton Place centre of neighborhood controversy

Neighbors up in arms Residence taken over for 'battered women'

By Mary Cook
Citizen correspondent
The takeover of a temporary

The property is zoned R2, which means Interval House has a legal right to locate in the area. However, whether or not it would still meet bylaw requirements if it was classed as an institution is another question. The town's building inspectors are currently reviewing the building's plans for a boarding house.

Battered wives not a uniquely urban evil

By Cliff Brimmell
Citizen correspondent

CARLETON PLACE — Behind the surface tranquility of rural life, big-city violence sometimes lurks.

"On farms you can scream as loud as you want and the neighbors won't hear," says Fern Martin, one of six volunteer workers at the local Interval House, a shelter for battered women and children.

The house is looking for close to \$40,000 in community contributions so it can stay open.

The Interval House at Eganville recently closed for lack of funding.

Staff members of Interval House here esti-

mate that in 1981 there were 1,500 battered women in Lanark County. The total population is only 45,000.

Last year, 165 women and children were housed, with most staying at least a month.

Victims have included wives with broken ribs, jaws, and arms; a woman whose teeth were knocked out with a crowbar; and children whose emotions have been dulled by the sight of their father beating their mother.

Violence against women and children by husbands in rural areas is just as widespread, if not more so, than in the city, say staff workers at the house.

"The most horrendous thing is that there is no

consequence to that violence," says house coordinator Olive Millett.

"Isolation leads to a lot more problems," says Martin.

"I had no idea of the amount of violence in rural areas."

Millett says many women are so accustomed to the violence that when asked if they've been beaten, they automatically say no.

"But if I ask if they've ever been hit, they'll say: 'Oh yeah, I've been hit.'"

"Or strangled. Or thrown against a wall. Or threatened with a gun or a knife."

"And what do you call that?" asks Martin.

(Beating, page 32)



Fern Martin
'Isolation leads to problems'



LANARK COUNTY INTERVAL HOUSE AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**WE'VE SEEN IT, WE'VE
NAMED IT, WE'RE
CHANGING IT.**

45 YEARS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LANARK COUNTY.

