



# LCIHCS NEWS

Updates from Lanark County's Only Anti-Violence Organization



## 45 Years of Empowering Women in Lanark County

As the sun begins to shine and the breeze carries the promise of warmer days, Lanark County Interval House extends heartfelt greetings to our supporters. With the changing seasons, our dedication to the cause of empowering women and children affected by violence remains resolute.

This year we honour 45 years since LCIHCS opened its doors. While this milestone is not one we celebrate, it serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing need for our services. For 45 years, we have stood as a beacon of hope and support, empowering women in Lanark County to reclaim their lives and their dignity. As we reflect on this anniversary, we are reminded that violence persists, both globally and locally and we are left to ponder how much longer our shelter will be needed.

Amidst the beauty of spring and the anticipation of summer, our advocacy efforts persist. We stand firm in our call to the Province of Ontario to recognize Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as the epidemic it truly is. As we approach the two-year anniversary of the release of the 86 jury recommendations from the Renfrew County Inquest, our voices grow stronger. In April, a glimmer of hope emerged as the Ontario conservatives pledged support for bill 173, a crucial step towards declaring IPV an epidemic. Joining us in this vital endeavor are well over 90 municipalities across the province, representing more than 90% of its population.

The harsh reality remains: in 2023, 62 women fell victim to femicide in Ontario, including one in our very own Lanark County. With each life lost, our resolve to effect change intensifies. We invite you to join us in our efforts to end violence. With a calendar brimming with events, we eagerly anticipate your participation as we continue to work towards a future where every individual can thrive, free from the shadow of abuse.

# MY MEMORIES OF THE BEGINNINGS OF LCIH

## Reflections on 45 Years from Founding Mother Fern Martin

In 1978 The Hub in Almonte, with funding from the Status of Women, hired Sandra Boyd to research if there was a need for a women's shelter in Lanark County. The answer was a very clear "Yes".

Then, with the full support of Ray Elgersma, head of Lanark County Social Services, as well as members of The Hub and The Exchange in Carleton Place and a few other women and men, a house was rented and the Lanark County Interval House doors opened for 'business' in April, 1979.

There were only two paid staff to run this 24 hour a day, seven day a week operation. The rest of the time was covered by volunteers. None of us had any experience for such a job - supporting and counselling women and children fleeing their abusive male partners and fathers. But we did have some skills. For example, I was a hairdresser - a handy skill in a women's shelter. I also, almost, had a diploma in Early Childhood Education (I didn't finish the last course). I did one daytime shift a week at Interval House and often made several loaves of molasses/oatmeal bread in the kitchen while I chatted with the women.

We all learned on the job. It was a 'crash' course. We learned by listening to the women and doing our best to meet their needs - taking them to the hospital, providing information on how to apply for welfare, housing, secure legal issues, etc. We developed a good rapport with several police officers, mental health counsellors, and Crown Attorney John Waugh.

Initially I thought I didn't know any women who were abused - I was wrong. It wasn't until the shelter opened that friends started to share their own situations. Some of the men - whom I thought were good guys - had a different persona at home. Learning about abuse was an eye-opener. It wasn't just physical and sexual, but also emotional, financial, even religious. There are so many ways to abuse and control your partner. And the physical abuse wasn't minor.

I vividly remember being called to attend an emergency staff meeting where we learned that the police officers had brought a family to the shelter and left with a warning that this particular violent man was very dangerous. He had no fear of the police and would stop at nothing if he learned our location. He had brutally beaten his wife and broke his young daughters arm when she tried to protect her mother. We decided to double-shift so that if he did find our location there would be a second person present to call the police.

I remember sitting in my car, getting ready to leave, thinking of what we had just been told. I had a peculiar urge to faint.

This was 45 years ago. Shelter workers are much better educated these days. And the legal system has improved somewhat. For example, police are quicker to lay charges and the woman is no longer required to testify. But the issue of male violence has not abated - in fact it may be worse. This is a very discouraging reality. But while change is incremental and there is still much to be done, I know that Interval House will continue to be an essential beacon for the women of Lanark County.



Executive Director Erin Lee, Former Board Chair Megan Ryder-Burbridge, Fern Martin, and Former Board Chair Valerie Martin, Take Back the Night 2021



Fern educates the public in a local paper, early 1980's

# 45 YEARS AND COUNTING

## *Reflections on 45 Years from Executive Director Erin Lee*

Our founding leaders never imagined that 45 years after their kitchen table discussions and planning, that the services of Lanark County Interval House and Community Support would still be needed. Not only needed but needed in forms that were not even a part of the equation.

We have indeed evolved and followed the lead of our founders and our community to become a part of a larger quest in our community to ensure that Lanark County is a safe place to grow and play.

Our shelter has physically grown, the building is accessible, equipped with safety and technology devices to ensure optimal safety. Our spaces are mindful of privacy, the ever changing cultural needs of our growing community and our programs have grown exponentially. We have many group supports for women and children. We lead training with local businesses, schools and community groups. We have created housing options including second stage housing and beyond second stage options. We are more present and political and have increased respectful and meaningful relationships with local media, police services and community based organizations.

We have grown in our capacity to influence, lead and remain solid in our outreach and social media presence. We raise funds to support creative programs with women, children and youth at the center.

We remain change agents who listen to survivors, believe survivors and we walk alongside survivors seeking justice and equality rights.

We challenge systems with confidence and we are consulted on matters pertaining to our area of expertise. We are present at the political table, on all levels, and share the wisdom and strength of those who often seem voiceless.

We have grown rooted in our foundation. We have not lost the reason for our service and remain dedicated to the safety and well being of women and children in our community.

Our founders built a foundation of tenacity, relentless hope and belief in community and we continue to grow in those roots based on and informed by the women and children of Lanark County.

We continue to work toward a world in which our agency is NOT needed. We are forever grateful to those who came before us, those active today and for those who will carry us forward.

## OUR HERSTORY

While LCIHCS officially opened in May 1979, a grand opening ceremony could not be performed as the shelter filled up in April with women in need of emergency shelter

**1980:** The As Good As New Store opened its doors.

**1983:** A massive fundraising campaign resulted in the purchase of our present location in Carleton Place

**1991:** We added an addition to our shelter to accommodate a children's playroom

**1996:** Renovations to make LCIHCS wheelchair accessible

**2002:** An Outreach Office was opened in Carleton Place and established two new programs with provincial government funding: The Transitional Support Program and the Child and Youth Program

**2004:** Sexual Assault Support Program established

**2006:** An Outreach Office was opened in Perth to offer increased community support to women and their children in Perth and the Lanark Highlands

**2008:** Our newly renovated shelter was officially opened! We had received a one-time grant from our Ministry of Community and Social Services to fund the extensive renovations. Our administrative offices were moved into our century-house and a brand new seven bedroom, accessible shelter was built on our existing property

**2009:** We launched our 3-year Where is the Love? project for youth, proudly funded by the Status of Women Canada

**2011:** Launched our 3-year Truth for Rural Youth project, proudly funded by the Status of Women Canada

**2019:** Funded by Tiree, we were able to purchase an additional building in Carleton Place which houses offices and our Second Stage Housing Program, a six unit housing opportunity which offers supportive housing to women and their children fleeing abuse. There are staff on site five days a week to offer support and assistance to women who feel that they are not quite ready to integrate into the community.

**May 2019:** Proudly honoured 40 years of LCIHCS Service

**2020:** We began our Victim Advocate position, the only agency in Ontario to offer this service

**2022:** We were able to purchase an additional building in Perth, Beyond Second Stage. This building houses six additional units for women leaving the shelter and Second Stage. Perseverance Pantry Opened.

**2023:** Suit Yourself Program launched

# A NEW LOGO FOR OUR 45TH YEAR

In this graphic, we feature some of the remarkable individuals who have shaped our agency, alongside the symbol of butterflies representing transformation, rebirth, and hope.



Our founding mother, Fern Martin, once envisioned closing our doors within a decade, believing there were no abused women in Lanark County. Yet, the need persists, driving our unwavering commitment to create lasting change.

At LCIHCS, we are unique in our aspiration to work ourselves out of a job, tirelessly striving for a world free from violence since 1979. Together, we've faced the harsh realities of violence, spoken its name, and tirelessly worked to end violence.

We've seen it, we've named it and we are changing it. Please check our social media weekly as we share with you our intentions for the year and encourage you to participate.

We extend our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support and solidarity with our mission throughout the years. Thank you.



# CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!



Celebrating International Women's Day was a joyous occasion filled with meaningful activities and heartfelt connections. We were privileged to be hosted by Jennifer Irwin at the Carleton Place and Beckwith Heritage Museum, who delivered a captivating presentation on the remarkable contributions of influential women in our local history. Their stories resonated deeply with our staff, inspiring us to honor their legacies and continue advocating for gender equality. Additionally, our dedicated placement students put together a delightful tea party for our shelter residents, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere with lots of laughter and empowerment. It was a cherished moment shared by all, highlighting the importance of solidarity and support among women in our community.

# WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE: NEW LCIHCS SWAG!

Back by popular demand: Look good and feel better in LCIHCS merch! 100% of the proceeds directly supports our shelter and programming. Our See It, Name It, Change It hoodies are available in two new colours (purple and black) and the crewnecks are available in four new colours (sand, military green, maroon, and pink)! We have plenty of t-shirts available as well.

Visit [www.lcih.org/shop](http://www.lcih.org/shop) to place your order or stop in to the As Good As New Store from May 13-18 to purchase your swag.



# HONOURING TWO YEARS SINCE THE RENFREW COUNTY INQUEST

## Reflections from Executive Director Erin Lee

As we face the two year mark since the release of the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations, we at LCIHCS must be proud and vigilant in our efforts. With Lanark County in the lead, as the first municipality to declare recommendation number 1, declare IPV an epidemic, 96 municipalities have followed suit.

You, the community have and continue to pave the way and step up!

Many actions have taken place; communities are reinstating high risk tables, communities are educating and collaborating. The Neighbours Friends and Family organization funded and launched a rural roots iteration of the campaign and used our see it name it change it language as part of the title! Provincial networks and organizations, including AMO and CFUW are engaged! Happy Roots is funding a deep dive initiative into creating a guide to assist municipalities and agencies to take further action on timely inquest recommendations and the Canadian Women's Foundation has funded a think tank of provincial advocates to unite and plan next steps in the efforts to end IPV.

Four members of the NDP have introduced a bill (173) to have an act that declares IPV an epidemic in Ontario, and second reading is April 10th, 2024.

Many conversations, webinars and action is taking place across sectors with a focus on rural realities which is long overdue.

While we continue the efforts, it is important to honour and recognize that domestic homicides and violence in relationships are ever present across our province, our country and globally. We must continue to ensure that women's voices are heard and responded to! And every community must engage in action as every small step makes room for further steps to eradicate IPV.



## PRESENTATION TO ROMA

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

## BILL 173 PASSED SECOND READING: AN IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD

In April, some of our staff headed to Queen's Park in Toronto to support Bill 173 as it was debated in the Legislature. the Government of Ontario carried Bill 173: Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic Act through a second reading and deferred it to the Justice Policy Committee. This means that the provincial government has recognized what we have long known and been calling for them to name: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is an epidemic. While this is an important step forward, we do not need more research or studies. The work has been done and the province has had access to 86 recommendations for action for two years.

Nearly 200 survivors, advocates and front-line workers were at Queen's Park to support the bill. We have all been clear in our demands: the time for action is now. The time for believing and supporting survivors is now. We remain positive and hope the province will take swift action.



# EMPOWERING YOUTH: NAVIGATING ONLINE SAFETY AT OUR SPRING CONFERENCE

In April, we hosted students from Notre Dame, CPHS, ADHS, PDCI, SFDCI and St. Luke's over two days at our Spring Youth Conference, funded by the Lanark County OPP and Smiths Falls Police Services. Dr. Christopher Dietzel presented excellent information on online and digital safety. Students were engaged and asked so many thoughtful questions - we were impressed!



## KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE ONLINE

In the digital age, ensuring online safety is paramount. Here are some essential tips and insights to navigate the digital landscape securely:

- **Password Management:** Utilize a password manager to generate and store complex passwords securely, enhancing your account protection.
- **Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Implement a second layer of security, mitigating unauthorized access to your accounts, even if passwords are compromised.
- **Virtual Private Network (VPN):** Safeguard your online activities by obscuring your IP address with a VPN, shielding your identity and data from prying eyes.
- **Encrypted Messengers:** Protect your communications from interception by utilizing encrypted messaging platforms, ensuring only intended recipients can access your messages.
- **Anti-Doxing Services:** Safeguard your personal information from online exposure by employing anti-doxing services, minimizing the risk of identity theft and harassment.

Furthermore, understanding how abusers exploit technology is crucial for personal safety:

- **Spying:** Abusers may use various tactics like monitoring device history, altering privacy settings, or deploying spyware and hidden cameras to track and control victims.
- **Harassment:** From threatening messages to tampering with online accounts, abusers employ technology to intimidate, manipulate, and discredit their victims, often crossing legal boundaries.
- **Children's Involvement:** Abusers may exploit children's devices and accounts to facilitate surveillance and communication, necessitating vigilance and proactive measures to protect their privacy and safety.

Empowering individuals with knowledge on technology abuse and providing support mechanisms, such as safety planning and evidence collection strategies, are crucial steps in combating digital harassment and ensuring the well-being of victims.

Check out some of these amazing resources for more information:

- More on the [Types of Abuse](#), including technology abuse, on our website
- Information on [Safe Sexting Practices](#) and [How to Talk to Teens About Sexting](#) on our website
- Luke's Place's fantastic [Tech Safety Tool Kit](#)
- Canadian Women's Foundation has several [Digital Safety Tip Sheets](#) on their website
- iSisters Technology Mentoring is a free computer and job training for women in need. iSisters works with community organizations to offer free programs to disadvantaged women. Connect with them at [www.isisters.org](http://www.isisters.org)!



# MAY IS SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

May is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It is an opportunity to raise awareness about the devastating impact of this crime, to better understand its deep cultural and historical roots, to support victims and survivors and to work together to stop the violence. It's also an opportunity to highlight the strength and resilience of survivors, and to recognize the accomplishments of the individuals and organizations that are working to raise awareness of sexual assault, support victims and prosecute offenders.



*Our We Stand With Survivors Banner hanging in Smiths Falls 2023 (top) and Perth 2022.*

We are pleased to have joined once again with Women's Sexual Assault Centre of Renfrew County and their #WeStandWithSurvivors campaign. For the month of May, we will have a banner hanging in Mississippi Mills outside of the Almonte Library. This banner shows survivors of sexual assault that we as a community believe them, hear them and stand with them. We encourage you to help change the culture! Believe survivors, respect boundaries and challenge victim blaming!

This Sexual Assault Prevention Month, we encourage you to **CHANGE THE CULTURE** surrounding sexual assault. Believe survivors, respect boundaries and challenge victim blaming. It all comes down to Seeing It, Naming It and Changing It. Calling out disrespect, crossing boundaries, jokes that make light of rape culture or bad behaviour is what causes change!

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual assault, support them by listening, believing and being non-judgemental. Do not judge the situation or how they choose to react to it - it's their choice. Help them feel empowered by offering options like LCIHCS.

**Remember: you are not alone. In Lanark County, you've got support.**

**Community Support's Sexual Assault Support Program 613-253-3336 ext. 11  
LCIHCS 24 Hour Crisis Line 1-800-267-7946**

## OVERCOME ISOLATION & CONNECT WITH A CARING COMMUNITY: WOMEN'S TELEPHONE SUPPORT GROUP

In January, we introduces our Women's Telephone Support Group. The group is dedicated to helping women combat isolation and providing a caring, understanding community.

This group warmly welcomes ALL women in Lanark County who are 50+ and have experienced domestic or sexual violence in their lives.



**For registration details, please contact Tess at 613-253-3336 ext. 223 or email [tess.powter@lcih.com](mailto:tess.powter@lcih.com).**

# ARTIST OLIVIA RODRIGO INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION OF ACTIVISTS

Earlier this spring while on her GUTS World Tour, Olivia Rodrigo announced her Fund 4 Good: a global initiative committed to building an equitable and just future for women and girls through direct support of community based non-profits that champion girls' education, support reproductive rights and prevent gender-based violence.

To continue to raise awareness of injustices against reproductive rights, Rodrigo has partnered with local organizations in the American cities she's touring in to fundraise for access to abortion.

In some cities, concert goers received free contraceptives like Plan B and condoms. In Canada, Olivia chose to donate a portion of her Canadian tour proceeds to Women's Shelters Canada, who supports over 600 shelters across the country just like us to help women and their children who are fleeing abuse.

Olivia's activism has caused controversy, but we are proud of her for using her fame and platform to speak out about divisive issues and do something truly meaningful. She is an inspiration to a young audience!



# HONOURING OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Canada's statistics have revealed that two-thirds of Canadian nonprofit organizations faced a shortage of volunteers during and beyond the COVID-19 era with 59% of charities still facing a significant decrease in volunteers. We've been incredibly fortunate to say that our volunteer team has grown by over **140% since 2019!**

From keeping our As Good As New Thrift Store running smoothly to offering crucial shelter support, tackling daily operations, and even lending a hand with organization and cleaning, our volunteers do it all with boundless enthusiasm and generosity.

We were thrilled to be able to celebrate the hard work of our volunteers at an appreciation tea party and an event during National Volunteer Appreciation Week. We'd like to say again to each and every one of our volunteers, past and present, we extend our heartfelt gratitude. Your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment make our mission possible. Thank you for being part of our team!



# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS

We are, as always, so blessed to be located in such a generous county. We'd like to extend our sincerest thanks to some sponsors who have made a big difference lately:



- Jackson Homes
- Jeff Julian, Dejarjans Insurance Agent
- Smiths Falls Curling Club
- Rotary Club of Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills
- Royal Lepage
- RONA Carleton Place & Smiths Falls
- Streve Design Perth
- Carleton Place Comicon
- Indian Creek
- Bayshore Health Care
- Meghan Cook, My Bedtime Song
- Rideau-St.Lawrence Real Estate Board



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# WHAT'S COMING UP: LCIHCS EVENTS

25

April

## **THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT: WATER COLOUR FUNDRAISER WITH PAINT WITH JANET**

Come together with friends, old and new, as we paint, share stories, and honor the resilience of those who have found solace within the walls of Lanark County Interval House. Your participation helps us continue our mission of providing safety, support, and empowerment to women in need.

7-9:30 P.M. AT CARLETON PLACE ARMY NAVY, COST \$45

31

May

## **GOLF FOR CHANGE: FUNDRAISING GOLF TOURNAMENT**

Get ready to tee off for a cause and join us for a day filled with laughter, camaraderie, and plenty of memorable moments. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting out, our tournament promises to be a hole-in-one experience! All proceeds will go directly to women and children fleeing a life of violence and abuse.

[Register now at www.canadahelps.org.](http://www.canadahelps.org)

11 A.M.-6 P.M. AT MISSISSIPPI MILLS GOLF COURSE, COST \$160/PLAYER.

28

June

## **BECAUSE OF YOU! CELEBRATING THE WORK TO END VAW**

We invite survivors, family members, those who have advocated for implementation of the recommendations, media, members of the public who want to make their communities safer for everyone to join us for a community discussion and vigil marking the second anniversary of the CKW inquest verdict.

RSVP via Luke's Place Eventbrite Link. Email [info@lcih.com](mailto:info@lcih.com) for more details.

3-7:30 P.M. AT OPEONGO SENIORS CENTRE, 19 STAFFORD ST., BARRY'S BAY

19

Sept

## **TAKE BACK THE NIGHT MARCH**

For over 10 years, Carleton Place has been host to one of the most well-attended rural Take Back the Night Marches in Canada. March with us reets safely be upheld.nners and noise-makers in record numbers. All to demand that a woman's right to walk our streets safely be upheld. Take Back the Night is about women's right to be free of violence and to walk without fear.

5:30 P.M. IN THE PARK BEHIND CARLETON PLACE TOWN HALL

23

Sept

## **ANNUAL GENERAL**

Join us for our annual general meeting and a discussion of LCIHCS' accomplishments over the last 45 years. Stay tuned to our social media for details on becoming a voting member and on how to register.

6P.M. AT ALMONTE PUBLIC LIBRARY

8

Nov

## **16TH ANNUAL VIOLET FEMMES GALA**

Join us for an wonderful evening with your closest gal pals! At his fabulous girls night out event, in support of Lanark County Interval House and Community Support, you can expect delicious food, cocktails, great music, an elaborate silent auction & raffle table, and so much more!

TICKETS ON SALE EARLY SEPTEMBER - STAY TUNED TO SOCIAL MEDIA