



Women's House  
Serving Bruce and Grey

# 2022/23

## ANNUAL REPORT

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## VISION

We envision a world where women are empowered, and women and children are safe, secure, and free from violence.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Women's House provides a safe haven for victims/survivors, knowing that ending violence is a community responsibility. We will work towards ending violence through knowledge, which is power, in order to create change.

## PRINCIPLES

1. It is a basic human right to be free from abuse and sexual violence. Also, it is a basic human right to have safety, dignity, respect, social and economic justice, self-determination and to contribute to society in our own manner.
2. Abuse and sexual violence are societal problems, yet generally perceived as private matters. Community has an obligation to become involved in these issues.
3. Education is necessary to bring about effective changes in attitude. We believe in challenging statements and beliefs that minimize the seriousness of racism, oppression, abuse and sexual violence.
4. Children's lives are traumatized by exposure to abusive environments. Their witnessing and normalizing of violence perpetuates the cycle. Their needs are specific and distinct from the needs of their parents.
5. We believe in fostering, sustaining and affirming women's culture and diversity and that they are sources of enrichment and strength.
6. We value the reality of every individual's experience and acknowledge and respect their uniqueness and understand that individuals may display a variety of behaviours as coping strategies. However, safety of the woman shall be the primary focus of any intervention and she shall receive sensitive, immediate and appropriate service.
7. We believe that poverty, hunger and homelessness are safety issues that keep women and children in abusive situations.
8. Women's House recognizes that all women face misogyny and sexism; however, some bear an additional burden of oppression due to racism and other forms of oppression.
9. We believe that systemic racism, discrimination, and oppression based on race, religion, class, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, and ability must be addressed as part of an integrated approach to ending poverty, abuse, sexual violence, and homelessness in the lives of women.
10. Networking, partnerships and resource building with other community partners is essential in order to best serve the needs of women experiencing abuse and/or sexual violence.
11. A coordinated community approach to service delivery is essential in order to provide options and information about services and the impacts of abuse and sexual violence so that the victim/survivors can make informed choices.
12. We believe that the abuser is responsible for their behaviour and should be held accountable. Society must develop a policy of zero tolerance for abuse and sexual violence.
13. Women's House believes in being accountable to the victims and survivors who use our services.



## **In-House Emergency Shelter**

- A safe, secure, and supportive environment to accommodate up to 13 women and children
- Trained counsellor on duty 24/7

## **24-hour Support Lines**

Toll free, local, and sexual assault support lines answered 24/7 by professional counsellors



## **Child Witness Program**

- Education for parents regarding the effects on children who witness abuse
- Individual and group counselling for children between the ages of four (4) and sixteen (16)

## **Violence Against Women Counselling**

Individual outreach counselling available in Chesley, Durham, Hanover, Kincardine, Markdale, Owen Sound, Port Elgin, Southampton, Walkerton, and Wiarton

## **Second Stage Housing Program**

Units in Kincardine, Port Elgin, and Wiarton offer safe and affordable housing for women and their children for up to one year

## **Group Counselling**

Groups provided throughout Bruce & Grey counties in areas of need such as: Self Esteem, Dealing with Anger, When your Relationship Ends, and Finding Your Own Voice

## **Sexual Assault Services, Public Education and Volunteer Coordination**

- Confidential support of women sixteen (16) years of age and older who have been sexually assaulted recently or in the past
- Public education initiatives to provide awareness and understanding of sexual and gender-based violence

## **Youth Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Services**

Support for youth (12-18) and women (18+) who have experienced, or been exposed to, sexual violence and/or human trafficking

## **Transitional Support**

Workers assist women with developing a transition plan and provide advocacy in the areas of housing, education, job training, income support, legal aid, childcare, transportation, etc.

## **Community and Fund Development**

Educates the public on Women's House services and the issue of violence against women through public speaking engagements and presentations

## **Volunteer Services**

Opportunities to volunteer throughout the organization



Violence Against Women Services



Women and Children Centre



Outreach Support



Wheelchair Accessible



LGBT support



**Judy Rich**

**Chair**

**Lisa McArthur**

**Vice Chair**

**Amanda Friesen**

**Treasurer**

**Joanna Malott**

**Secretary**

**Tracy Primeau**

**Director**

**Meag Durkin**

**Director**

**Gavin Fick**

**Director**

**Christine John**

**Director**

**Allison O'Neill**

**Director**

**Kelly Hegarty**

**Director**

**Stephanie Metcalfe**

**Director**

*In the 2022/23 fiscal period:*



**908**

individual women  
were served



**15,023**

crisis, support, and  
advocacy calls were  
managed on the  
phone lines



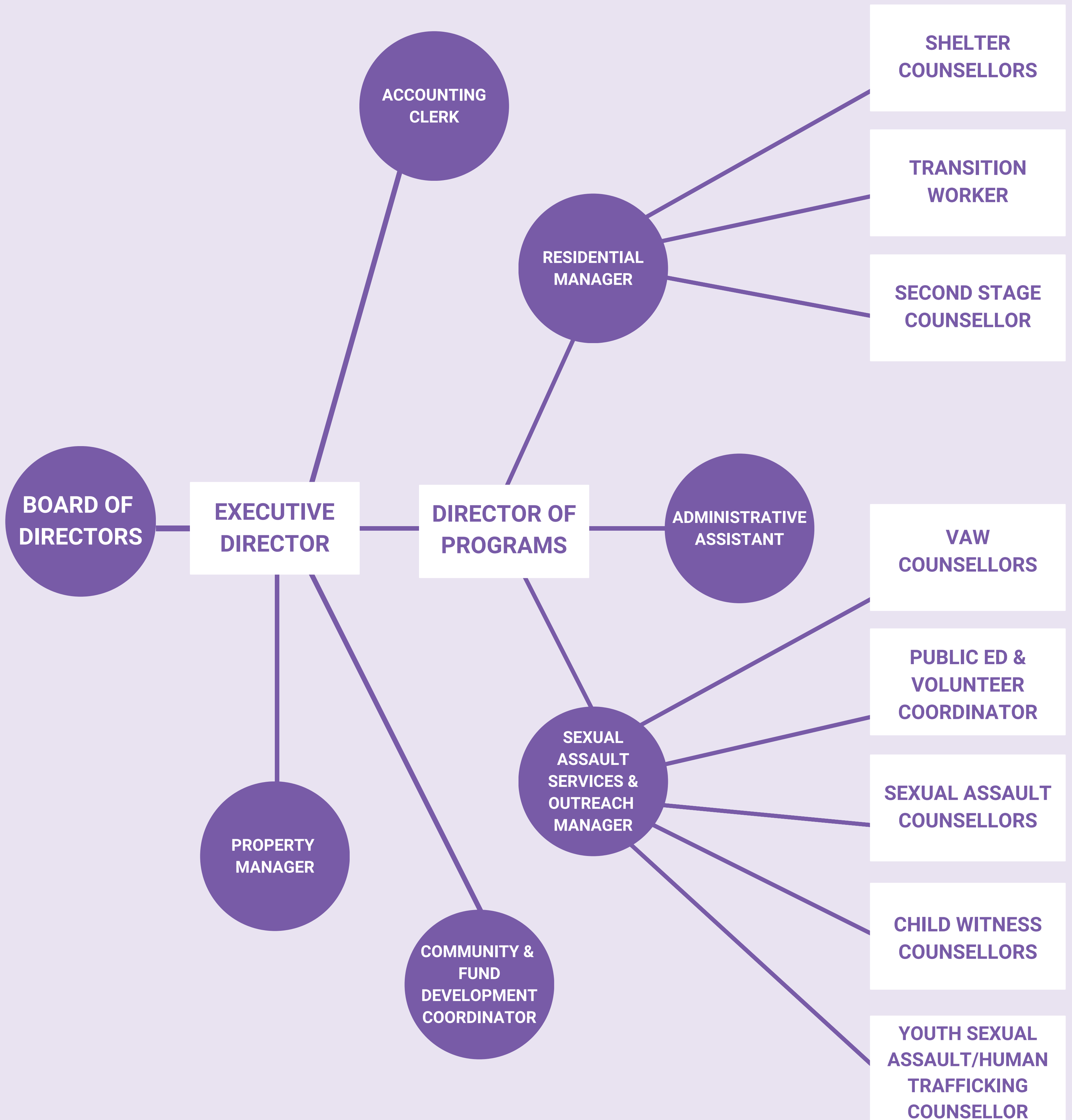
**256**

individual children  
were served



# WOMEN'S HOUSE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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## Thank you to Women's House Sponsors, Funders and Grantors

### Champions | \$10,000

+



### Innovators | \$7,500-\$9,999



### Believers | \$5,000-\$7,499



Larry Bannerman Foundation

### Friends | \$2,500-\$4,999



Kincardine Friday Night Bridge Club

### Contributors | \$1,000-\$2,499





Board & Staff

# ANNUAL REPORTS



Women's House  
Serving Bruce and Grey



This was my first year in the Board Chair role and I must firstly take the opportunity to thank Tracy Primeau, Past-Chair, who has provided her invaluable, inexhaustible support and guidance throughout the year as I embarked on this journey. I would also like to thank the Board members as they have provided their limitless assistance and encouragement throughout the year.

We welcomed three new Board members to our team and I couldn't be more excited for the knowledge and passion that they add to our team. As a board, we continued to meet virtually, and I am enthusiastic at the prospect of meeting in person again.

While COVID appears to be in the rear-view mirror, the impact on our services is still front and centre with our attention to safety. The Management and Staff at Women's House continue to show their ability to adapt quickly and work together to continue to safely meet the needs of our clients.

The many services we provide would not be possible without adequate funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, and our many corporate and individual donors from the past year. It has become essential that we continue to build sustainable funding within our community, recognizing that all donations, regardless of size, contribute to our service program offerings. We are looking forward to growing our corporate partners, while celebrating our existing contributors. We continue to have community awareness and host regular events that celebrate the outstanding support from our community.

"Walk a Mile" continues to grow and bring more men forward from the community to show their support. This year, we partnered again with Business to Bruce for International Women's Day where we were inspired by the stories from women leaders in our community who discussed raising the bar, breaking glass ceilings and building new bridges, all from our local community! It was a fantastic evening and we are already looking forward to next year.

The Management and Staff attended an Intersectionality Workshop this past year and dove deep into the application of an Intersectional Approach to Women's House at an organizational level, our service level and within the community. This workshop was a great experience where we were able to spend a couple of days together and connect over ideas on an intersectional path forward for our services.

I would like to thank all of our staff, volunteers, and our Board members, for their time, commitment and passion for the work we do as part of the Women's House team. Together, with Management and Staff we will continue to work towards a world where our services are no longer required.

**"VOLUNTEERS DO NOT  
NECESSARILY HAVE THE TIME;  
THEY JUST HAVE THE HEART."  
- ELIZABETH ANDREW**



# MARCY STOCKING • INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES & OUTREACH MANAGER

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As we move forward toward a life living after COVID-19, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the workers and volunteers who provided and continue to provide compassionate care to our most vulnerable population. It is through the dedication of our essential workers and partners that these past couple years have been marked with continued progress towards the fulfillment of our mandate.

During the pandemic and this past year, the women in our community impacted by gender-based violence have been further marginalized. As the cost of living continues to rise, that gap continues to grow. We cannot ignore the fact that the pandemic has pushed us back and we will need more time and investment to continue our work to end violence against women in Bruce/Grey County. So where do we go from here?

Strengthening programming, enhance staffing and collaborative resources must continue to stay a priority. We will continue to advocate and pursue the fulfillment of our vision of a world where women are empowered, and women and children are safe, secure, and free from violence.

As recognition grew that life will never truly go back to the way it was before the pandemic, we continued to respond to the challenges while examining how we can deliver the greatest possible impact in a changed future and work towards ending violence through knowledge, which is power, in order to create change. With a skilled and dedicated leadership team firmly in place, we continued to develop and examine our policies, procedures and staffing structure and began the process to move forward with roles and positions to ensure optimum service delivery.

As a new Executive Director, I have learned a great deal. In fact, I continue to learn each and every day. With this unique environment can come many challenges and uncomfortable moments. Times when we need to slow down, reconnect with each other and evaluate our wellness and self care. Collectively, our team moves together through the changes that need to happen and the potential changes that could happen. I am especially thankful to work with a dynamic group of women who accept the challenges that come their way and find creative solutions to work through those difficulties. I am very proud of the long list of things our entire team has achieved. And we are just getting started!

Women`s House remained compliant with all reporting requirements over this past year. This included: Ministry of Children Community and Social Services Quarterly Statistical and Financial Reports, Pay Equity Reports, an Annual Serious Occurrence Report, and a Risk Assessment Report; Ministry of Attorney General Quarterly Statistical and Financial Quarterly Reports; a Bruce County Housing Annual Occupancy Report, and Annual Affordable Housing Report; and an Annual Salary Disclosure Report. Women`s House also underwent its annual review of insurance coverages. Women`s House maintained its membership with the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH), and the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centers (OCRCC). The Executive Director also participated in the provincial Let`s Talk group. The annual review of Women`s House Policy and Procedures took place, with particular attention paid to new legislation, which ensured compliance with the new regulations.

Women`s House will continue to hold bi-monthly full staff meetings, allowing the organization to continually enhance and improve internal communications and a positive cultural shift. The Executive Director maintained responsibility for the direct supervision of the Shelter Manager, Sexual Assault Services and Outreach Manager, Property Manager, Administrative Assistant, Accounting Clerk, Community and Fund Development Coordinator, and Second Stage Counsellor. Also, at the end of the year, a new schedule was implemented in the Shelter program. It is hoped that the changes will increase staff retention, support staff in practicing better work life balance, and contribute to more stability for residents in the program.

Every day, we witness and experience the struggles, tragedy, and triumph of our clients and our community. For decades, our work has been a labour of love and determination – against considerable obstacles, scarce resources, and lack of public understanding.



# MARCY STOCKING • INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES & OUTREACH MANAGER

In recent years, our shared priority as an organization has been to stop, stabilize and build sustainable resources. It is hoped that Women's House will be able to continue to remove barriers and build sustainable resources for women.

When I look to the future I see additional possibilities, opportunities, partnerships and collaboration. I see services that meet the changing needs of women in our community. I see different service models that are creative and out of the norm. I see us continuing to think ahead, create a new path and to find our place as leaders in the community that use our voice to educate and create movement to end violence against women. The possibilities are endless but of course not without cost, energy and drive to get there.

Once again this year the support through grants, donations and fundraising efforts has been amazing! It helps us deliver programming; maintain our direct support to women and second stage housing; attract and retain highly skilled staff and ensure women have everything they need to move forward with lives free from violence.

To our donors, supporters, community partners, volunteers, Board of Director members and staff - your time, commitment, passion and dedication make all the difference to keeping families safe. Thank you for your kind words that motivate us and encourage us to do our best as we encourage women to also strive for the best. And that collectively is our work. For all of us to think about our action to end violence against women and create change in our community. Join us as we continue on that path and let's make that change happen together.

In closing, we must acknowledge the strength and resiliency of the women and children we serve. Living with and through trauma brought on by abuse and violence is, in itself, a very difficult feat. But to find the strength to take a stand in the midst of a forever changing world/community is nothing short of amazing. We are humbled by their tenacity, their ability to put one foot in front of the other and step toward a life free from abuse and violence.

Whenever you need to talk, we're here



Women's House  
Serving Bruce and Grey

LOCAL: 519-396-9655  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-265-3026  
SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT LINE: 1-866-578-5566



When it comes to Shelter and Second Stage Housing services, 2022 was another year of moving through adversity. The words that come to mind are resilience, perseverance, and advocacy. It was another year of navigating the pandemic; adapting service delivery based on Ministry and Public Health Ontario guidelines. It was another year of confronting staffing challenges and at times, scrambling to find solutions. This year we experienced a great deal of organizational change; adjustments in the leadership team, negotiating a new collective agreement, creating space to learn and grow as a full staff team. And, despite the challenges, we continued to hold space for our service users: women and children who are experiencing storms far worse than ours. Never has there been a more important time to embrace our feminist counselling practices. Never has there been a more important time to listen to one another. What we know for sure is the work is complex. A number of the issues and challenges that our service users face continue to be exacerbated as a result of the pandemic.

## **COVID-19**

This year we continued to prioritize situations of abuse for admissions, though we lifted geographical restrictions and began operating above fifty percent in the shelter. We continued to use alternative accommodations as needed for shelter overflow. While we opened up for non-residential counselling on-site, our numbers were low. While we attempted to reintroduce our volunteer programming, recruitment has been tough. It's no surprise that our crisis-support telephone lines, including our sexual assault support line were heavily used throughout the year. As you can imagine, safety planning has been front and center in our work with women. Women have openly disclosed the significant impact of isolation, many choosing to stay in abusive situations.

The Second Stage Counsellor continued to support both women in Second Stage Housing as well as a caseload of women in the community needing transition and housing support. We have shifted back to providing programming in-person, though virtual and phone appointments are available based on women's preferences. We have seen this past year, through feedback and program stats, just how essential the Second Stage Counsellor role is. Crisis intervention, case planning, counselling support, education, safety planning, and resident meetings are all key elements of this residential program. As we move into 2023, our Second Stage Counsellor is eager to get back to facilitating groups. We will be continuing to try and recruit volunteers for peer support and transportation purposes.

We have continually updated and maintained the use of our Women's House COVID-19 Health and Safety document outlining guidelines and control measures to prevent, eliminate and reduce the hazards of a COVID-19 outbreak within the shelter. The shelter has remained in compliance with Ministry and Public Health directives. Enhanced training has been provided to all shelter staff specific to COVID-19 health and safety practices, including outbreak management and the provision of key services and supports. The shelter maintains an adequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment available for staff use.

## **Health and Safety**

With the support of our Property Manager, we continue to complete monthly inspections, comprehensive fire drills, panic alarm drills, and panic button testing in the shelter. During weekly team meetings, we debrief incidents and alarm activity and have increased safety talks. Shelter team staff have ensured the renewal of first aid certification and WHIMIS as required.

With a flood in the shelter basement at the end of August, we were without a common room and full restoration took months. The loss of our family recreation room and child and youth storage room and contents felt significant, especially with a full shelter. The basement rec room offers a bit of an escape for some shelter residents and ensures some privacy and quiet time for those wanting to get away from the day-to-day hustle and bustle. This had a direct impact on shelter and group dynamics.



### Staff Management & Program Delivery

To drive team development and increase organizational commitment, our full Women's House team participated in an Intersectionality Workshop, delivered through Catalyst Research and Communications. This offered the opportunity for discussion about providing services that acknowledge and understand the intersectional realities of women. Topics included building community, understanding power, learning about ourselves and others, and building resiliency.

Throughout this past year, I provided support and supervision to the Counsellors on Duty, the Transition Worker, and Second Stage Counsellor. Due to turnover, we onboarded several new relief staff during 2022 and have continued to enhance our orientation and training program. There is an added focus on harm reduction (administering naloxone), stats collection, legal aid, and family court support. Continued training goals focus on de-escalation strategies, feminist-based counselling strategies, and suicide prevention training.



### Testimonials



To improve communication and case management systems, the shelter team has continued to embrace weekly case management and team meetings. We updated case planning and personal needs assessment tools, enhanced the use of WISH, and ensured ongoing emergency backup as needed. This helps to ensure compliance with policies and procedures, driving staff's decision-making and problem-solving abilities. The management team has also promoted the use of committee work and small working groups, many in response to strategic planning activities. This offers newly hired staff an added way to learn about our internal culture and ensures effective knowledge transfer. One goal for the year ahead is to increase support and supervision meetings.

Throughout the year, our staff continued to facilitate a supportive environment in the shelter, helping women to try and stay balanced and grounded. We meet women where they are at, providing strengths-based support and promoting core trauma-informed principles: acknowledgment, safety, trust, choice, compassion, and collaboration. This means additional time spent advocating, providing court support, and connecting with women, children, and youth. Open communication is essential as we examine power issues, understand trauma response, and help families overcome barriers and build connections. Collaboration is essential, especially with our Outreach programs.

I have continued to coordinate our Family Court Support Worker program overseeing stats collection. There has been a focus on resource development and sharing of Luke's Place discussion topics specific to family court issues. This year we also offered additional training for all staff: After She Leaves. This program offers training on family law issues relevant to women who have left abusive relationships. We continue to offer Legal Aid Ontario 2hr authorization certificates for domestic violence situations.



# BERNICE CONNELL • DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

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2022-23 at Women's House proved to be a year of adapting to multiple new challenges while remaining true to our vision and values regarding service to women and children. The Violence Against Women sector is not alone in this new reality of service delivery. Service system partners continue to experience added pressures carrying out their roles, which can result in precarious responses to those needing help. I appreciated the opportunity to take on a new position this year – Director of Programs. The position included managing the ongoing operations of programs through supervision of the Residential Manager, Sexual Assault Services and Outreach Manager and Administrative Assistant. The work also focused on community collaborations and special projects, including serving as Coordinator for our local Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee: Violence Prevention Grey Bruce.

Violence Prevention Grey Bruce Committee and sub-committees met regularly over the past year:

- Elder Abuse Prevention acquired funding to undertake community consultations throughout Bruce & Grey.
- The Anti-Human Trafficking Committee is completing a strategic plan.
- In collaboration with Catalyst Consulting and the working group, completed the strategic plan and terms of reference.
- Participated regularly with both regional and provincial Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees.
- Attended regular meetings of the Community Safety and Well-Being Project.
- Attended the Perth, Huron, Grey Bruce Rural Response to the Renfrew Inquest Recommendations, in Clinton, and continued collaboration on this four-county initiative.
- Promoted 'We Count Femicide Because...', the provincial campaign reporting femicides, with a view to increased public awareness and prevention.

The Renfrew County Inquest Report on the 2015 deaths of Carol Culletin, Anastasia Kuzyk and Natahalie Warmerdam was released in June, 2022. The report identifies 86 recommendations, including having intimate partner violence (IPV) declared an epidemic and strong support for adequate and stable funding for organizations providing IPV services. Grey/Bruce, Huron and Perth Counties are working to add our voices to a rural response to the inquiry. Recommendations include law reform work, prevention and political advocacy. The violence against women sector is working across the province to ensure the inquest report can be a catalyst for real change in our work to end intimate partner violence.

Other relevant issue-related activities over the year included:

- Education regarding the Supreme Court Extreme Intoxication Decisions in sexual assault cases where intoxication is used as a defense.
- Workshop – Recognizing Litigation Abuse as a Form of Family Violence: Understanding the Concept and Potential Harm.
- Participation in the National Oxfam Summit, focusing on effective advocacy on a national and international scale.
- Leith Duncan from the University of Guelph conducted extensive research on the impact of Covid 19 on rural communities, including Bruce & Grey. Findings include that females of all income levels experienced significant decreases in their mental health assessments and that, without adequate resources, individuals and communities cannot reach safety and health.

We had an important learning opportunity this year at Women's House – a three-day workshop on creating an Intersectionality Framework to inform our work on gender-based violence. Intersectionality is the concept that all oppression is linked. Intersectionality is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and that oppression comes in multiple forms – gender, race, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, etc.

After several years of being short-staffed in most programs, we are approaching the point where most positions are filled and the roster of relief staff for shelter coverage is sufficient. The Youth Sexual Assault & Human Trafficking program got off to a good start with a balance of one to one support for individuals and community networking. The last couple months of this year presented several challenging situations for the administration staff. I want to acknowledge the exemplary work done by these individuals to get us through collective bargaining, financial year end and covering the Executive Director role. Moving forward in the coming year, we are engaging in organization culture change work. Staff members, leaders and Board members will be involved to strengthen internal organizational capacity. As always, my appreciation goes to individuals at all levels of the organization, from front line staff to the Board of Directors, working to ensure responsive service to increasingly more complex support requests from the women and children we serve. It has been an honour and a privilege to work alongside such dedicated colleagues.



The 2022/23 fiscal year saw Women's House begin to return to pre-pandemic operations with employees returning to in-person meetings and on-site workspaces. Many precautions remained in place, including enhanced screening and sanitization efforts, and many of the staffing difficulties faced throughout the earlier years of the pandemic continued.

### Human Resources

Maintaining appropriate levels of staffing is always of utmost importance at Women's House. While all of our programs and services are vital, it is imperative that we retain a level of staff sufficient to continue operations in our shelter program; this ensures that women and children continue to have a safe place to turn.

A substantial amount of time was spent on staffing efforts this year, including: recruitment; interviewing and onboarding new employees; facilitating staff leaves and resignations; and managing internal job postings & subsequent staff reorganization. Following the trend of the previous few years, staff recruitment efforts were a focal point this year as we experienced a higher rate of staff turnover and position vacancies, combined with a significant decrease in job applications. This has resulted in a much smaller pool of relief staff for our shelter program. Relief counsellors are an integral part of our organization: they fill vacancies in the 24-hour shelter as a result of vacation, illness and other absences, and they provide vital front-line support to women and children seeking safety and support. Unfortunately, the lack of guaranteed hours of work and the call-in, shift-work nature of the position make it less desirable to those who are seeking part- or full-time employment.



Women's House  
Serving Bruce and Grey

**WE ARE HIRING**

»» **RELIEF COUNSELLORS**

Benefits of working at Women's House:

- Interesting and challenging work where one can be part of the process of empowering women
- Opportunities for growth and mobility within the organization
- Witness women's healing journeys from beginning to end

Visit [whsbg.on.ca/careers](http://whsbg.on.ca/careers)  
for more information and to apply

Efforts to expand job posting visibility and increase recruitment included connecting with educational institutions regarding potential placement and employment opportunities and advertising job opportunities on various social media platforms and online job boards/websites. Staff recruitment and retention will continue to be of utmost importance in the upcoming year, and finding new ways to reach potential employees will be necessary in order to be successful in these efforts.

An application was submitted to secure summer student employment at Women's House, and we were awarded funding this year through the Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program to hire a full-time Transition Support Worker. Our recruitment efforts for the position this year were successful and we were able to employ a student on a full-time temporary basis throughout the summer. The summer student employee works alongside numerous staff members during their employment, utilizing this opportunity to learn a great deal about Women's House, violence against women and the shelter program. It has proven to be very successful in providing a foundational knowledge for those who wish to continue employment in the field. Another application was made through CSJ to request funding for the same position in the next fiscal year.



# ALANA EADIE • ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

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## Administrative

With administrative and outreach employees returning on-site after two-plus years of remote work, a return to in-person communication was vital to ensure appropriate delivery of service. The ability to connect in-person as a larger team again allowed for team meetings and training sessions that had solely been taking place virtually the past two to three years. Virtual meetings continued to be utilized to encourage & facilitate further connection amongst staff working at different sites. All staff were finally able to take part in an in-person Intersectional Framework workshop in January that had been postponed numerous times due to the pandemic and gathering restrictions.

Active involvement with the Board of Directors continued throughout the year, including compiling monthly Board Packages with staff reports and distributing these prior to each board meeting. Board meetings and the AGM were held remotely via Zoom this year, and most communications happened virtually. The Annual Report covering the 2021/22 fiscal year was compiled and distributed at the Annual General Meeting in June, as well as being posted on the Women's House website. Time was spent assisting with both spring and fall ad-mail campaigns, including set-up, formatting and contribution of educational material.

Work continued on overseeing the maintenance of the organization's website and social media platforms. An increased online presence was once again necessary this year to communicate important information and updates. Social media posts advertising Women's House crisis lines and services were created and shared on an ongoing basis. Social media platforms were also utilized to run a number of educational and awareness campaigns related to domestic violence, sexual assault and anti-racism/anti-oppression. As our social media following increases steadily, it will be imperative to continue utilizing these platforms to provide education and awareness to a broader audience.

You can be a great source of support and information for a friend or family member.

Visit our website at [whsbg.on.ca/help-a-friend](https://whsbg.on.ca/help-a-friend) for more resources



HOW TO HELP

Find shelters across Canada by visiting [sheltersafe.ca](https://sheltersafe.ca)

You can locate a shelter in a specific geographic area along with its 24-hour emergency phone number.



FIND A SHELTER

Find Us on Social Media



Women's House Serving Bruce and Grey  
@WomensHouseBG



As of June 2022, a new Public Education and Volunteer Coordinator (PEVC) with over 15 years of experience working towards the support of survivors and prevention of gender-based violence for various feminist-led organized agencies throughout Ontario, joined the Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey Team.

### Volunteer Appreciations, Recruitment, Training, and Engagement

While volunteer opportunities shifted drastically as a result of the pandemic, and the ways in which volunteers were able to stay engaged decreased, the dedication and commitment of our long-time volunteers is greatly appreciated. In a sector founded on the passion and perseverance of volunteers supporting survivors and creating a collective response through action, WH owes a great deal to the many community members who go above and beyond to donate their skills, time and resources to supporting survivors, preventing violence and contributing to creating a safe and welcoming respite for many. In the last year, WH has continued to benefit from the many hours of hard work from our incredible maintenance volunteers Bill and Gavin. In the last fiscal year WH has onboarded **11 NEW volunteers** and is excited to work with them!

## 77 VOLUNTEERS, 270 HOURS

### Outreach and Awareness Raising

Throughout the Summer of 2022, the PEVC invested time to agency promotion, Public Education program awareness and building community connections for continued growth and collaboration. Public Education and Volunteering opportunities shifted drastically as a result of the pandemic. Special attention to increasing WH's visibility and participation at community events is an ongoing goal, and the PEVC is seeking any information or leads for additional opportunities. WH's Owen Sound storefront's revitalization, resource creations and material distribution focus on increasing community member's awareness of programs and services available to support and prevent gender-based violence and oppression.

Attendance at Kincardine Pride, Owen Sound Pride, Summerfolk Music Festival, M'Wikwedong's Overdose Awareness Day, CFUW, Port Elgin December 6th Vigil, Port Elgin's Recreation and Leisure Night, M'Wikwedong's 2SLGBTQAI+ focused day for youth and Scotiabank's Hockey Day in Owen Sound sparked valued partnerships and volunteer engagement opportunities. Outreach to Indigenous-led organizations and leadership are fundamental to WH's value of reconciliation and intersectional analysis of gender-based violence and require ongoing commitment. Visibility and participation in local media is an area of interest to increase outreach and education. Last year the PEVC participated in print, radio and television interviews to discuss relevant themes, events and information and greatly appreciates the dedication of local media in raising awareness and increasing community engagement in creating a world free of violence and oppression.



Jessica, PEVC, assembling Truth and Reconciliation Day appreciation baskets for delivery to valued Indigenous-led community agencies



Women's House information booth at OHL Inside Owen Sound Attack Game

## 84 EDUCATIONAL EVENTS



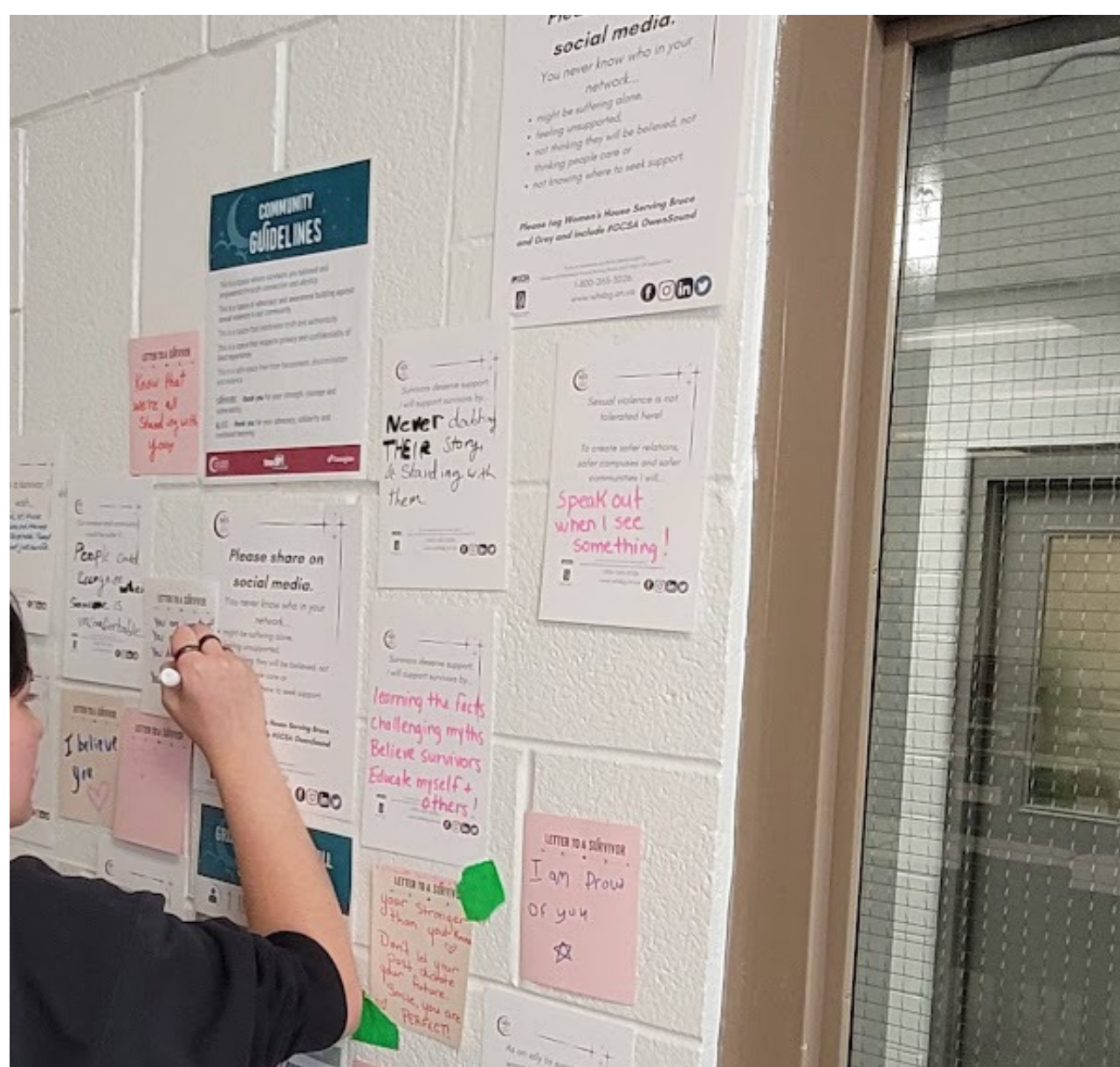
## OVER 614 PARTICIPANTS

### Public Education and Violence Prevention

Education is power. Via public education events, presentations, workshops and campaigns, WH strives to address gender-based violence and oppression from an upstream cornerstone of change. In collaboration with Georgian College and M'wikwedong, WH hosted an on-campus Take Back the Night March and Rally to end sexual violence in September of 2022. WH looks forward to hosting a 2023 community focused Take Back the Night succeeding the impact of Covid on in-person events and large gatherings. In commemoration of the 1989 Montreal Massacre and a call to action in recognition of the continued impact of misogyny and oppression resulting in the 52 documented Ontario femicides in 2022, WH partnered with Metis Ontario, M'Wikwedong, The Men's Program and The Women's Centre to host Owen's Sounds annual December 6th Vigil as part of the #16Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence from November 25 - December 10.



Women's House information booth at Scotiabank Hockey Day in Owen Sound



Georgian College student participating in awareness raising campaign as part of the Take Back the Night March and Rally

In addition to responding to community partner and social groups requests for educational programming, the PEVC provided professional development training for Bluewater District School Board's Child and Youth Workers around the delivery of an anti-human trafficking curriculum called Recognizing Exploitation a Syllabus to End Trafficking (R.E.S.E.T.). In recognition of the impact of toxic masculinity in sports culture, the PEVC facilitated a virtual training for parents and coaches of an Owen Sound Minor Hockey team. WH, in partnership with the Male Allies program of SASC Waterloo, delivered a live, virtual, 8-week Male Allies Training with aspirations of increasing male allyship engagement and learning opportunities moving forward. Future opportunities for aspiring male allyship will ideally grow from this initial project. As part of an ongoing provincial collaboration between the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and the Ontario Hockey League, the PEVC co-facilitated with Liam Nicoll from CMHA's The Men's Program a two-hour educational session call OHL Onside with the Owen Sound Attack geared at the prevention of gender-based violence and recognition of bystander intervention opportunities for community leaders. Conversations about ongoing collaboration and increased educational opportunities with local sports teams are increasingly relevant and exciting.

## INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

## HAVE A DESIRE TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION?

## BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF EDUCATION. WANT TO INCREASE AWARENESS IN YOUR WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY?

CONTACT JESSICA,  
EDUCATION@WHSBG.ON.CA OR VOLUNTEER@WHSBG.ON.CA  
519-372-1113 EXT. 229



Even though the pandemic protocols have mostly been lifted, participation in events has been slow to build. At the same time, we're seeing a decline in the very generous financial support trends of the community during the pandemic. This declining donation trend was expected, as support has exceeded expectations and budgets have been challenged over this period, so the community will be tightening their belts as we all watch and wait for things to normalize. We made the leap back to in-person events, and with patience we hope to see the attendance and participation return to normal. The continued generosity of our annual sponsors has helped us to not only meet, but exceed, our \$124,790 fundraising target this past year.

### Community Development

Support, donations and sponsorship go hand in hand with community development. Building relationships and making people aware of what we do helps them to understand the value of Women's House to our community. We held many virtual presentations this past fiscal year with great feedback from the participants, often leading to financial support. They help us financially and to build awareness, and also gain a great sense of pride in the fact that their contributions help our most vulnerable community members to have options for a better life; it's a win-win.

### Fund Development

With some of the events we hold, attendance or participation directly affects the fundraising abilities. This year we jumped back in to in-person events. People were slow to commit to attending, so it also affects our ability to use those platforms as a means to educate the public in terms of attendance numbers. As the fiscal year progressed, event attendance was increasing, so we're hopeful for continued growth.

Walk a Mile in Her Shoes (WAM) - May 2022: With pandemic protocols lifted, we had our first in-person event with Walk a Mile events. We also added a Kincardine walk to our roster, with Casual Creations, Ewyn Studios and the Bruce Bar & Grill as lead event and host sponsors. We had an encouraging turnout for the new Kincardine walk with 20 walkers but a rather disappointing turnout of only eight participants in the Port Elgin walk (normally there are over 40). While the turnout was disappointing, we are seeing all community events affected with low attendance as we navigate the world opening back up again, with people reluctant to get back to reconnecting after the pandemic concerns.

Woman Abuse Prevention Month (WAPM) and Wrapped in Courage Campaign - November 2022 included:

- Articles and media releases during the 16 Days of Activism
- OPP WAPM Awareness Photo Op and social media posts
- Kincardine Nimrod Club media release/photo op regarding their \$1000 donation/support for WH and their statements regarding their stand against gender-based violence
- Marketplace Magazine article with information and stats surrounding gender-based violence
- Grey-Bruce Legal Clinic partnership to promote awareness
- Fall Admail Newsletter including much information on WAPM, Male Allyship and inspiring change
- Fundraising in lieu of November's Wrapped in Courage scarf sales included Holiday Photo Sessions by donation (by JMedia)





Giving Tuesday – November 29, 2022: Giving Tuesday has become a growing fundraising opportunity for us. Giving Tuesday saw on-line donations of \$1336, and with the “incentive donation-matching” sponsorship of Westario’s \$1,000 funding, bringing the total to \$2336 – not bad for one day!

International Women’s Day (IWD) - March 2022: Together, Bruce County’s Business to Bruce program and Women’s House Serving Bruce & Grey hosted An Evening with Women Leading Change, an in-person event at the Kincardine Pavilion, with 111 attendees enjoying hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar while hearing from the powerful speakers. Proceeds from tickets sales and additional donations raised a total of \$4,868 and the virtual Silent Auction, hosted by NPX, earned \$2,009 in proceeds. County of Bruce looked after all expenses associated with the event, leaving the total at \$6877 in proceeds for Women’s House.

Host Events continue to create a synergy of support and relationship building, allowing our community members to take leadership in their goals to support Women’s House, while enabling us to build good partnerships in the community and reap the rewards of a supportive community outside of our typical reach. We helped to support and guide various community members as they held six individual host events on behalf of Women’s House during this past fiscal year.

## **Donations**

At the best of times, we have a generous community, where groups and organizations make it their priority to help the women and children who knock on our door each day. And, at the worst of times, we can see that the relationships we have built with those supporters have laid the groundwork for ongoing support – and this was very apparent this year. Early in the fiscal year, donations continued to flood in from individuals, service groups, church groups and municipalities, and were also made in memory of loved ones, in lieu of birthday gifts and a variety of other gifts from bequests to investments. The donations are currently trending towards being similar to pre-pandemic amounts, but sponsors, grantors and funders continue to make generous contributions.

CanadaHelps has become a popular means to make donations, with over \$42,000 in total donations in this fiscal year. Monthly donation commitments stand at 16 donors, making a consistent collective \$756 a month (over \$9,000 per year) donation on this platform. We continue work to promote and grow this monthly donation option, making it a reliable and sustainable means of maintaining and increasing donations.

Spring Admail was sent out to 1200+ homes from mailing list donors and via email in May 2022, which is Sexual Assault Prevention Month. The main article by myself – Pandemic Recovery: Changing the Norm (with a focus on Human Trafficking). Fall/Winter Admail was sent out to 700+ homes in November 2022, which is Woman Abuse Prevention Month. Main article, “Male Allyship and Male Champions Inspire Change”, by Jessica St. Peter, Public Education & Volunteer Coordinator at WHSBG

## **Grants**

Fewer grant requests were made this past year because of changes in their focus area and criteria. For those grants that were available to us, the requested amounts were somewhat increased, in an attempt to fill the gap made by lower than average revenues from fundraising events and campaigns. The response from the grant donors that supported us was overwhelmingly supportive, often with donations higher than expected.

## **Sponsorships**

With 24 annual Sponsors in our Sponsorship Program this fiscal year, many are long-time supporters and either have multi-year commitments or renew on their anniversary date. We have had five new sponsors come on board, each with a one-year commitment, and we will work to grow those relationships in hopes to have them continue to support us going forward each year.

In conclusion, our community has helped us to exceed total fundraising targets for this fiscal year. This will provide a financial cushion to put us in good standing for next year. These efforts demonstrate the ongoing support that our community has for the vital work that we do in helping women and their children that have experienced violence to have happier, healthier lives.



### **Kincardine Main Building**

Grant-based funds allowed for the following capital projects this year:

- Replacing the ductless A/C units in the Kincardine Main Building
- Replacing the front yard garden area with stones
- Repairing and painting all the walls for the Kincardine Main Building
- Replacing the flooring in the shelter basement
- Replacing the main building Administrative HVAC
- Installing cabinets and locks in the shelter playroom
- Removing asbestos in the Transition Office ceiling
- Repairing three rooms in the shelter basement for drainage issues
- Replacing the kitchenette cabinets and counters in the employee lunch room
- Installing shelves for storage in the shelter basement
- Replacing the counters in the shelter kitchen
- Purchasing backyard toys and accessories
- Replacing the playroom floors and baseboards
- Upgrading the Wi-Fi coverage in the shelter
- Installing ethernet jacks in each shelter bedroom

### **Second Stage**

By March 31, 2023, we had 24 women and 39 children that lived in our Second Stage Housing Units. The average length of stay was 8 months per woman.

Funds from Community Foundation Grey Bruce, and benches and planters donated from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC) Local 2222, allowed us to create a more welcoming backyard in the Port Elgin and Kincardine Second Stage properties. Funds from the Accessibility Grant allowed us to install automatic doors at the Kincardine Second Stage Building. Additionally, to save energy and to ensure the safety of the residents, motion lights were installed in the hallways.

### **Owen Sound**

A Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) infrastructure grant allowed us to replace the main floor flooring in the Owen Sound outreach building.

### **Administration**

The Wellness Committee organized a luncheon at one of the full staff meetings this past year, in addition to a staff wellness day utilizing funds from MCCSS special grants.

To streamline accounts payable, the Property Manager began setting up paperless invoices and automatic withdrawals from building services.

With \$5,000 received from the Community Foundation of Grey Bruce, Harm Reduction Kits and other needed resources and supplies were purchased for distribution through the Youth Sexual Assault/Human Trafficking program.

### **Health and Safety**

Health and Safety duties this year included: co-chairing the Joint Health and Safety Committee; overseeing monthly inspections; WHMIS Testing; First Aid Inspections; workplace illnesses and injuries; COVID and Illness procedures.

With year end funds we purchased two AED units for the organization. One will be located at the shelter in Kincardine and one in Owen Sound. St John's Ambulance will provide training to staff on these specific devices.

### **Maintenance Volunteers**

A giant THANK YOU goes out to our two amazing maintenance volunteers, Bill Harper and Gavin Fick. They have been busy ensuring our buildings are kept operating properly when things are broken, assembling many new items and helping us prepare rooms during major renovations. We could not provide the services we do without these volunteers ensuring our space is a safe and great environment to work and stay in.



