



Women's Interval Home of
Sarnia-Lambton

22
23

Annual Report

The Women's Interval
Home of Sarnia-Lambton



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**A safe and supported community
where all voices are heard, and
everyone lives free of abuse.**

Welcome to our annual report for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. We are thrilled to share with you the progress and accomplishments we have made towards our mission during this time. This report highlights the hard work and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters who have made our achievements possible. We hope this report provides insight into our organization's impact and inspires continued support for our work. Thank you for your interest and dedication to our cause.

WELCOME!

MISSION

- Emergency shelter and crisis services, outreach, and education to our diverse rural and urban communities
- Advocacy and support to individuals, families, children, and youth
- Community education and awareness to counteract abuse, promoting social change through inclusive feminist work
- Support in navigating community social services through our active collaboration with our community partners



NOTABLE YEARS



MICHELLE
30 YEARS



PATRICE
5 YEARS



JODI
5 YEARS



A MESSAGE FROM THE E.D.

Looking back on another busy and successful year, I wish to express my gratitude to the staff, volunteers, and Board members of the Women's Interval Home of Sarnia-Lambton (WIHSL) for their grace and generosity and tireless work to extend services to women and child survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence. Their dedication results in meaningful change in the lives of those working to survive and learn to thrive after violence.

In addition to our 24-7 crisis line and residential facility, our successful group programs continue to help women and children. These include our Child Witness Concurrent Group, Spill the Tea, Women's Support Group, Empower You, and Youth Relationship Program.

As part of WIHSL five-year strategic plan, this year we learned about traumatic brain injury, restorative practice, and continue training on equity, diversity, inclusivity, and cultural competency. Using a trauma-informed approach and this knowledge, we are reviewing all policies and procedures to remove systemic barriers to ensure all WIHSL clients have equitable access to our services and community resources.

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we are responding to the increased violence in our community. We conducted extensive community consultations to better understand how to engage those persons inflicting or receiving harm who are not currently seeking assistance. External consultants Leaf Seligman, Laura Pageau, and Jordan Williams helped build this knowledge and develop our new Restore YOU program designed to help people understand how trauma impacts their decisions and behaviour through both a clinical and Indigenous spirituality lens. This program successfully launched in April 2023.

New funding from Women's Shelter Canada allowed us to hire a Concurrent Disorders Coordinator and offer training to staff to address the mental health and addiction issues experienced by women surviving violence. The data collected will demonstrate to our funder, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the need for a permanent position. This funding also enabled Board governance training for new and existing board members.

Our facility upgrades continued, including new security cameras with clearer and more extensive images, fresh paint to the main and second-floor walls, and a beautiful \$160K backyard upgrade funded by CIBC Hines and Women's Shelter Canada, complete with new playground equipment, a soft rubber surface, a shaded pergola, and raised garden beds for vegetables.

Looking at Board activities, I congratulate and thank Dorian Noble for stepping into the role of Board Chair and acknowledge the work of past Chair Cara Mathieson. I also recognize the long-term commitment of Erin Pollard, Treasurer, and Pat St. Armand, Secretary. Finally, I welcome all new board members and volunteers and thank those who continue to work with us. Without all of you, our work here at WIHSL would be much more difficult. I also welcome all new staff at WIHSL and say a heartfelt goodbye to those who have decided to move to new work opportunities. All of you have brought wisdom and skills to this difficult work.

-Jennifer Vansteenkiste

MEET THE BOARD



Dorian Noble
President
Elected January 2022



Erin Pollard
Treasurer
Elected June 2012



Parick St. Amand
Secretary
Elected March 2021



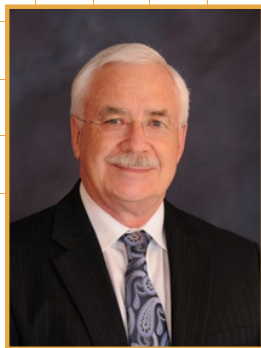
Jessica Bonnema
Elected January 2022



Martha Chipman
Elected August 2022



Marina Plain
Elected July 2022



Larry Lafranier
Elected February 2023



Amy Hughes
Elected February 2023

MANAGEMENT UPDATES

Residential Program

Our residential program continues to be busy. Most of the time we are at capacity in the shelter, however, we have seen a bit of a lull in the past few weeks with only a couple residents currently. In my experience seeing this happen in the past, an influx usually follows- so staff takes the time to catch up with shelter tasks that sometimes fall behind due to taking care of a busy shelter and supporting many shelter clients.

Shelter staff have also seen an increase in severity, and number of clients coming through our doors with more complex mental health and addiction struggles. This has made supporting clients more challenging and has required more staff on shift for safety purposes. Due to the increase of mental health and addictions we have focused on many changes to support clients who may be struggling, which include a new courtyard that was completed later last year. Clients are starting to enjoy this as the weather continues to get warmer.

Also, we have a team of staff that is working on creating a vegetable and herb garden that the clients can nurture, watch grow, and use for healthy eating options. We are also currently in the mid stages of creating a holistic healing space, and a workout room, as we strive for the physical and mental wellness of the clients we serve.

There have been a lot of good things happening in the past year at Women's Interval Home as we bounce back from impacts of the pandemic. I am excited to continue to work with our amazing team as our programs continue to develop in a positive direction.

-Rene Barnier

MANAGEMENT UPDATES

Director of Services- Training and Development

At Women's Interval Home, we believe in the importance of increasing community awareness on the impact of intimate partner violence. As an employer, we also prioritize the ongoing professional development of our staff members. By investing in our employees' growth and skills, we aim to enhance job satisfaction, increase competency levels, and diversify our expertise to better support clients experiencing the complex challenges of intimate partner violence.

To achieve this, we regularly provide staff with opportunities to participate in a variety of training programs. In the past year, our team members have received training on several topics, including:

- Restorative practices
- Human trafficking
- Suicide alertness and awareness
- Crisis de-escalation, utilizing verbal intervention techniques to support individuals experiencing distress
- Hearing Distressing Voices, an experiential understanding of the impact of voice hearing
- Narcan, safely administering life-saving medication to those experiencing an overdose
- First Aid/CPR
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

-Alison McKenzie

We are committed to providing ongoing education and training for our staff to ensure we can offer the best possible support and care to those affected by intimate partner violence.

NOTABLE

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Shoppers Drug Mart Foundation

100 Women Who Care

Progressive Auto

Rotary Club

D. Brousseau

MedAesthetics

Robert Noble

W & H Wray

Cabot Canada

Dan Falla - Collingwood
Giveaway

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



CIBC

CIBC PRIVATE WEALTH

hinesinvestments.ca



WOMEN'S
SHELTERS
CANADA

Alliance Fabricating

United Way

K. Al-Saadon Medicine

Local 663

Race to Erase

St. John's in the Wilderness

Royal Canadian Legion

St. Paul's Outreach

Carpenter's Local 1256

Skyway Canada



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OPERATION UPDATES

WIH YEAR OVERVIEW



1,619 Crisis Calls Answered



187 Unique Safety Plans
Created



103 Women Admitted
to Shelter



59 Children Admitted to
Shelter



150 Non-Residential clients served



69 Non-residential Children served



51 Clients served via County Outreach

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

WOMEN'S INTERVAL HOME OF SARNIA-LAMBTON INC.

Balance Sheet

As at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash (Note 4)	\$ 1,085,886	\$ 886,213
Short term investment	100,982	99,834
Accounts receivable	59,164	38,703
Prepaid expenses	23,252	19,161
	<u>1,269,284</u>	<u>1,043,911</u>
RESTRICTED ASSETS (Note 5)	170,491	169,161
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT (Note 6)	365,376	304,897
	<u>\$ 1,805,151</u>	<u>\$ 1,517,969</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued charges	\$ 86,645	\$ 160,751
Government remittances	1,348	1,190
Deferred revenue (Note 7)	148,156	34,908
	<u>236,149</u>	<u>196,849</u>
DEFERRED CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS	335,994	261,194
	<u>572,143</u>	<u>458,043</u>
NET ASSETS (DEFICIT)		
Fundraising fund	1,828,031	1,589,822
Property and equipment fund	29,382	43,700
Scholarship fund	170,491	169,161
General fund	(794,896)	(742,757)
	<u>1,233,008</u>	<u>1,059,926</u>
	<u>\$ 1,805,151</u>	<u>\$ 1,517,969</u>

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

WOMEN'S INTERVAL HOME OF SARNIA-LAMBTON INC.

Statement of Revenue and Expenditure

For the year ended March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
REVENUE		
Province of Ontario	\$ 1,345,982	\$ 1,265,112
New Horizons Grant	23,050	-
Sponsorships	3,692	70,025
Trillium	93,604	31,869
United Way	3,994	2,534
Women's Shelters Canada	164,723	96,323
Interest	4,490	1,983
Other	2,500	153
	1,642,035	1,467,999
EXPENDITURE		
Advertising	13,272	9,285
Bank charges	230	247
COVID relief	8,233	31,277
Employee benefits	173,501	172,187
Food and supplies	84,705	70,163
Insurance	24,133	22,424
Office	62,997	59,142
Professional fees	20,535	54,516
Rent (Note 8)	13,720	9,840
Repairs and maintenance	50,979	36,459
Response and recovery	160,015	76,323
Staff development	27,373	16,324
Telephone and cable	10,884	16,020
Transportation	9,575	6,917
Utilities	28,241	28,267
Violence against women	12,328	13,903
Wages and salaries	984,604	940,928
Wages and salaries - pay equity	8,849	8,352
	1,694,174	1,572,574
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER REVENUE	\$ (52,139)	\$ (104,575)

FUNDRAISING & MARKETING

Since joining Women's Interval Home in September 2022, Josephine has been actively involved in various initiatives. One of her notable contributions was her involvement in the Walk a Mile event held on November 19th, which successfully raised **\$25,000** for the organization. Following the event, Josephine focused her efforts on a soft rebranding project for WIH.

After presenting her ideas to the staff, several key items have been effectively managed and implemented:

- Fresh updated logo
- Email signatures
- Brand new website
- Fresh business cards
- Social media platforms
- Assistance in new program launch
- Social media consistency
- revamped printed marketing material

In addition to the marketing rehaul, Josephine has been working on numerous other initiatives include:

- Third Party event management and community presence with attractive table items and modern donation options
- Volunteer recruitment and management
- WAM 2023/2024 preparation

Josephine's professional focus will shifted towards funding proposals and event management, building upon the solid foundation she established through her marketing efforts. With her strategic approach and dedication, Josephine aims to create new opportunities for financial growth and community engagement for the organization.

-Josephine Ethier

Personal Presence

Attending more events

Markets, and networking lunches

New attraction

Finding ways to attract people to our advertisement space

Community Presentations

#HowCanIHelp
Restorative

Signature Events

How to make WAM more interactive
Additional events

Online Presence

Website

Should be #1 place for most up to date info

Social Media

Facebook/ Insta

New Avenues

LinkedIn, Tiktok
Online Campaigns

Groups

Emphasizing online groups
Enticement
Being Consistent

Networking

Community partnerships

Using them to create events, and networking for resources. Creating long term corporate funding.



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SERVICE UPDATES

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING & SUPPORT

During the past year, the Transitional and Housing Support Worker had 111 women registered in the program. Several of the clients who were not staying in shelter opted to remain in their current locations or move in with family or friends until they were able to secure safe, affordable units of their own. In these cases, safety planning was completed, and ongoing support offered throughout their transitional period. Of the clients who stayed in the shelter, 28 were able to discharge from the shelter to their own units, while 17 discharged to family or friends as a temporary option while waiting to secure permanent housing of their own. Approximately 10 women made the decision to return to their partners after receiving information on domestic violence and safety planning to do so.

The remainder of the women were either referred to another shelter in the community they wished to relocate to, or a more appropriate service such as withdrawal management detox at Bluewater Health or they opted to discharge and did not disclose their future plans.

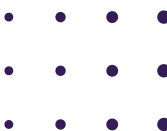
Lambton County continues to experience a deficit of safe, affordable housing. The challenges that the general population faces in securing housing are further complicated by the barriers specific to victims of domestic violence, such as a lack of references and poor credit based on abusive partners' behaviour, and damaged tenancy history due to abuse. 45 women completed the application for the Rent Geared to Income program through Lambton Housing. Although this program offers an affordable rental rate, lengthy wait times mean it is often a long-term plan.

-Lindsay Thomas



What Next?

The Transitional and Housing Support program continues to offer education, legal clinics, referrals, and advocacy to aid in the difficult transitional period when leaving a situation with domestic violence.



COUNTY OUTREACH

This past year, we were able to extend the hours of the County Outreach Counsellor role to provide enhanced services to women and children residing in the rural areas of Lambton County.

We offered the additional hours of service through links with other community partners at health centers in Forest, Petrolia, and Watford. An identified goal for the upcoming year is to also provide services in the southern part of Lambton County.

Services provided by the County Outreach program include individual supportive counselling, providing women with ongoing emotional support, information regarding domestic violence, advocacy, risk assessment and safety planning. Transitional and housing support services for county locations and children's counselling services were also provided. These services were provided in person, virtually and by phone.

The County Outreach Counsellor provided services to 60 women and children at various stages of their journey.

Clients living in areas like rural Lambton County have unique barriers such as lack of transportation and fuel costs, isolation due to the rural setting, confidentiality concerns due to the nature of living in a small town, longer response time for OPP, less affordable housing and a lack of supportive resources.



The County Outreach Counsellor and the Transitional and Housing Support Caseworker facilitated seven, 3-hour workshops throughout Lambton County geared towards neighbours, friends, family and colleagues about how to best support and assist someone who is living with domestic abuse. We also shared information about all the services Women's Interval Home provides.

-Heather Danen

NON- RESIDENTIAL COUNSELLOR



Over the last year, I have had the privilege of providing counselling services to 150 clients, and I have observed an increase in the number of clients seeking my services. During the COVID pandemic, I provided counselling over the phone; however, I found that meeting clients in person resulted in better rapport and increased client attendance and participation. It's worth noting that I am seeing more clients whose partners have substance abuse issues, particularly with cannabis, and there has been an increase in clients experiencing difficulty in finding housing. Additionally, I have noticed an increase in lengthy court processes and instances where police are not taking victims' abuse and safety seriously enough, resulting in no charges. Nonetheless, I remain optimistic that better public awareness and domestic violence training by police will help to reduce the incidence of domestic violence. Returning to in-person groups, such as Women's Support Group, will also be a significant step in the right direction.

-Cindy Murton

CHILD WITNESS COUNSELLOR



The Child Witness Program offers supportive counselling to children and youth ages 4 to 18 in the Sarnia area who have been exposed to domestic violence. Services include safety planning, trauma intervention and debriefing if needed, support following changes in the family, ie. Separation/divorce, custody/access, moving, school changes and new relationships. In my role as Child Witness Counsellor, I often provide advocacy for clients, referrals to other agencies and representation on community committees.

The 2022/23 fiscal year continued to present challenges with COVID restrictions which had an impact on how services were delivered to our community. Virtual and telephone appointments were offered to clients to accommodate individual needs. In person appointments, following protocols were observed to be the preference for most with a total of 69 children and youth participating. The Concurrent group program was facilitated for two sibling groups this year in person. It is my hope moving forward we will be able to increase these numbers and offer larger weekly support groups and continue to meet our client needs.

-Michelle Walsh



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PROGRAM UPDATES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SPILL THE TEA

This group evolved to provide clarity with information about housing in our community amid the current housing crisis. It began as a 6-week session being offered twice per year and has now launched as a once per month information session. This is an open group for anyone to attend and has guest speakers from community agencies touching on various topics such as renters rights, community support and financial education.

EMPOWERING YOU

Empowering You is a life skills program that promotes self-esteem and independence for our residential and non-residential clients. Through workshops and educational content, we empower women to develop new skills and enhance existing ones while addressing domestic violence. The program fosters connections among participants, encouraging them to share experiences, engage in healthy discussions, and support each other on their healing journeys. Although currently held virtually with low attendance, we anticipate higher participation when the program resumes in-person in September 2023.

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

The Women's Support group is a closed group for women dealing with domestic violence and abuse. Topics include awareness of power and control dynamics, healthy relationships, self-esteem, stress management, boundaries and assertiveness. Two staff co-facilitated three sessions of this virtual group and they were either 6 or 9 weeks in duration.

As the shelter transitions back to in person groups we plan to offer the 6-week group four times a year alternating between in person and virtually.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

RESTORE YOU

Introducing "Restore You," our new 8-week facilitated group program launching on April 19th and running consecutively until June 21st. It is a closed group open to individuals aged 18 and above. Interested participants need to complete a short assessment detailing their interest and desired outcomes. Upon completion, Rene will personally reach out to confirm attendance and commitment to the program dates.

Notice Wonder Acknowledge Appreciate



"Restore You" offers a unique and transformative experience centered on self-discovery and understanding others through restorative practices. Exploring the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions, the program delves into topics such as the unconscious mind, mindfulness, self-care, relationships, values, and boundaries. Indigenous cultural healing techniques, including the 7 Grandfather teachings and the tree exercise, enrich the learning journey by shedding light on personal choices and life paths. With a focus on acceptance and the elimination of shame, "Restore You" empowers participants to embark on a powerful journey of self-discovery.

Each session incorporates circle practice, providing a safe and non-judgmental space for participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Active listening is also encouraged, allowing individuals to engage at their own comfort level. As facilitators, myself, Laura Pageau (Psychotherapist), and Jordan Williams (Red Path Facilitator) are available for support, debriefing, or guidance before, during, and after sessions, ensuring each participant's needs are met.

Being involved in the development of this program fills me with pride as I witness its positive reception, even in its early stages. I firmly believe in its potential to guide individuals on a transformative journey of self-discovery, forgiveness, and healing.

"Being restorative means recognizing we all exist on a continuum of harm: we all experience it, cause it, witness it to varying degrees, sometimes simultaneously. And potentially, we exist on a continuum of healing that means we can heal, witness, and facilitate healing, sometimes simultaneously." - Leaf Seligman

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

The Youth Relationship Program has been running for many years. Within the last 3 years, there has been a steep decline in participants. In 2022 it ran in the Spring with 6 participants, in the Fall of 2022 there were 2 participants, and this past February-April 2023 it was facilitated with 1 participant. The intention for this program has shifted to adapting the program into a more accessible delivery model. In January of 2023, the revised program started to offer 1 – 3 hour workshops/presentations. The Youth Relationship Program content was used but rebranded to be more inclusive as Healthy Relationship. The goal for this new fiscal year is to:

- Continue to provide a 10-week healthy relationship program, now in collaboration with community partners
- Advertise the summarized (2-3 hour) Healthy Relationship workshop and 1-hour Healthy Relationships presentation
- Facilitate Healthy Relationship education in partnership with LKDSB and Lambton College
- Begin offering and advertising the series of three, 2-hour workshops with topics of “Types of Abuse and Characteristics of an Abuser”, “Risk Assessment and Safety Planning” and “Healthy Relationships and Communication



"This flexibility in service delivery will work to meet the unique needs, availability and reach more youth in Sarnia-Lambton and surrounding areas."

-Veronica Ross

CONCURRENT DISORDERS PROGRAM

The Concurrent Disorders Coordinator program offered support to women that identified substance use or that felt like they needed to work on their mental health. I had a total of 37 clients that accessed my services 1 on 1; 5 of which continued with my services after their discharge. I attended case plans for 94 residents that admitted to shelter and offer my services.

I also was able to assist during walk in's and crisis to provide extra support during challenging times for the clients. Due to the business of the shelter this extra support is not always able to be offered without my position. I attended Residents Meetings each week where I provided education along the side of the Domestic Violence counsellors on meditation, positive affirmations, boundaries, strengths, self-care, and healthy habits.

Some successes I saw with residents throughout the year was one resident graduated from virtual treatment through House of Sophrosyne. We had one resident that discharged to go to treatment at House of Sophrosyne. 2 residents discharged to Bluewater Health Withdraw Management. 1 of these residents went on to stay at Ryan's House. The other resident left to attend a treatment centre in Calgary.

-Amanda Mackie

SUB COMMITTEE

“SNAP SHOTS”

POLICY COMMITTEE

Reviewing approximately 100 program, personnel, and health and safety policies.

12 to date have been completed and approved.

All policies have been rewritten with an equity, diversity and inclusion lens.

GREEN TEAM

Implementing sustainability practices in the shelter based on The Sustainability Hierarchy. Reduced waste by eliminating single-use items in the kitchen.

Establishing a vegetable and native healing circle.

Collaborating with Green Economy Canada and Great Lakes Refill for guidance and support.

BASEMENT COMMITTEE

Renos to create a wellness and spiritual space.

Strongly supported by the 100 Women Who Care group who donated \$12,000.

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The annual Walk a Mile event raised over \$25,000 dollars and hosted 100+ attendees.

Nine survivor stories displayed for six weeks over Christmas at Lambton Mall.

CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE

55 Families and 126 Children Supported.
15 Sponsored Families.

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Purchases made to update defibrillator and fire extinguishers

Addition of Naloxone kits

Successful fire and tornado drills

Tornado Evacuation room moved to Group Room

THANK YOU

In conclusion, the Women's Interval Home has achieved remarkable milestones in empowering women, providing a safe haven, and raising awareness about domestic violence. None of this would have been possible without the tremendous support and collaboration from our community. We are immensely grateful for the unwavering support of individuals, businesses, and organizations who have stood by our side.

If you are inspired by our mission and would like to make a difference, there are several ways to get involved. You can consider organizing a fundraiser to support our programs and services, or even explore opportunities to join our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. We also welcome partnerships with like-minded organizations who share our commitment to ending domestic violence. Additionally, if you are passionate about our cause and possess the skills and expertise, we invite you to consider joining our board of directors to help shape the future of the Women's Interval Home.

Together, we can create lasting change and build a community where every individual can live a life free from violence. Please reach out to us if you would like to contribute, collaborate, or join us on this important journey. Your support will make a meaningful impact in the lives of survivors and help us create a safer and more compassionate society.

CONTACT US



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