



WOMEN'S INTERVAL HOME OF SARNIA-LAMBTON

Eliminating Family Violence

April 2020 - March 2021 Annual Report



Table of Contents

- p. 2 A Message from our Manager of Residential Services & Director of Services
- p. 3 Vision & Mission
- p. 4 Gender Based Violence by the Numbers
- p. 5 Meet our Board
- p. 6 WIH year at a glance
- p. 7 Statement of Operations
- p. 8 Transitional Support
- p. 9 Social Programming with CYC Veronica
- p. 10 Notable Community Support
- p. 11 Executive Director Summary

A Message from our Manager of Residential Services & Director of Services



Resilient – Flexible – Compassionate – Creative – Teamwork

These are the words that come to mind when reflecting on the work of the staff team at the Women's Interval Home every day, and most certainly during the pandemic.

COVID-19 required us to make changes with our day-to-day operations in our residential (shelter) and non-residential programs to ensure safety for staff and the women and children accessing our services.

Some examples of changes to our shelter include limiting the number of visitors (non-residential clients and community partners) coming into the shelter, changing how meals are provided as we could not use the dining room and had to stagger meal pick up times, increased cleaning and sanitizing protocols, and offering virtual groups. Some examples of changes to our non-residential programs include limiting the number of in-person appointments by offering most of the support via telephone or virtual meetings, offering virtual groups, and ensuring staff could work from home where possible. We have also been able to provide support through our County Outreach program for women and children living outside the city of Sarnia.

The team has done an incredible job and have become experts at shifting and pivoting as the landscape has changed through the pandemic. At the core of the discussions has always been how we can best support women and children while following all directives from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Province of Ontario, and Public Health. We have established extensive protocols to guide our day-to-day activities.

We have an amazing team of dedicated and compassionate staff at the Women's Interval Home! The staff share the goal of supporting women and children in our community who are facing some extremely challenging situations, and to support each other in their work.

VISION & MISSION

Women's Interval Home of Sarnia-Lambton Inc. is a nonprofit charitable organization that provides emergency shelter and counselling services to abused women and their children in Sarnia-Lambton. All our services are free of charge.

Mission To provide an immediate, safe alternative to an abusive family setting for women and children, and to enhance personal dignity by working towards the elimination of family violence.

Vision

- To interrupt the cyclical pattern of violence in present and future generations.
- To encourage the adoption of more effective, non-violent communication within the family.
- To provide women and children with a safe and supportive environment in which to define their own needs, make decisions, and work towards the achievement of personal goals.
- To act as a liaison and advocate for families with the existing community service network.
- To increase public awareness and understanding of the problem of family violence.
- To strive to improve the quality of life for women, children and the society in which they live through the elimination of family violence.

Gender Based Violence by the Numbers

6000+ Women and children sleep in shelters every night in Canada because they are escaping domestic violence at home

On average, every 2.5 days in Canada a woman is killed by her intimate partner

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, domestic violence rates in Canada have **increased up to 30%.**

From January- March 2021 alone, there have been **10 confirmed femicides** in Ontario. **1 of these was a confirmed case in Sarnia.**

Meet Our Board

Judy McKeegan(Chair/President)

Judy has been on the Board on 2 separate occasions and currently has been the Chair for the last 3 years. She is a business owner of a consulting firm for the last 20 years that assists transportation companies to work in both the US and Canada by handling laws and requirements. She has finished a 3 year time line on the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce and assisted in the Federal Trade Zone designation. Judy has supported the rights of women and children for the past 45 years and is looking forward to supporting both the staff and clients as well as the community of Sarnia Lambton in working towards the elimination of domestic violence.

Jennifer Mosley (Vice Chair/ Vice President)

Jennifer currently works full-time as a Program Manager of the E-Learning Centre at Sault College and an adjunct faculty member with Lambton College. Jennifer has her Child and Youth Worker Diploma from Lambton College and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Autism Behavioural Sciences from Algonquin College. Jennifer also has a four-year B.A. in Disability Studies from Ryerson University and will be wrapping up her Masters in Education – Community College from Central Michigan University in May 2022. Jennifer has a passion for ending domestic violence and the adverse and traumatic effects on children living in this environment. She believes in creating programs and services that raise awareness regarding domestic violence and finding preventative and proactive measures that lessen the cycle of violence.

Erin Pollard (Treasurer)

Erin has been on the Woman's Interval Home Board since 2012. She currently holds the role of Treasurer. She has been in the financial world since 2005 mostly brokering, however in the last 3 years she has found a home at IG Wealth Management. She is also the president of MADD Sarnia Lambton where she celebrated her 10th year as a volunteer. She is blessed to be part of the Board at the home, assisting women and children in our community who are experiencing domestic violence and need our services. She looks forward to working with the Board to best support the amazing staff at the Women's Interval Home in carrying out such important work in our community.

Stephanie St. Pierre (Secretary)

Stephanie is a Social Service Worker with a focus on addictions, acquired brain injury, trauma, and supporting clients' working towards meeting their life objectives. She completed her studies at Western University majoring in Women's Studies and Feminist Research with a minor in Gender Studies. Stephanie is happy to be on the Women's Interval Home Board where she can support those who advocate for the rights of women and work towards ending gender-based violence.

Anna Lakey

Anna Lakey (she, her) has been on the Board for a year and a half and is currently the interim Secretary. She also sits on the Sarnia-Lambton Anti-racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. During the workday, Anna is the Project Lead of the Centre for Social Justice and a Communications Professor at Lambton College.

Cara Mathieson

Cara Mathieson is a secondary teacher at the Lambton Kent District School Board. She has lived in Sarnia for the past 15 years with her family. She has made it her mission to serve her community by bringing equity and diversity to the forefront of all facets of her life. Part of this is serving her community as a Women's Interval Home Sarnia-Lambton Board member where she communicates the needs of the youth in our community to better keep people safe now and in the future.

Patrick St. Amand

Patrick St. Amand was born and raised in Sarnia. He is a father, a husband, and an elementary school teacher. Being a member of the Women's Interval Home Board of Directors is a tremendous responsibility. The work that the employees at the home do is inspiring and crucial for women and children in our community, and Patrick is proud to help contribute in any way that he can to aid the Women's Interval Home.

WIH Year at a Glance

April 2020 - March 2021



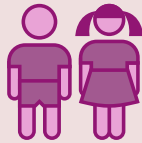
875 crisis calls answered



174 safety plans created



120 women admit to shelter



51 children admit to shelter



105 non-residential clients served



44 non-residential children served



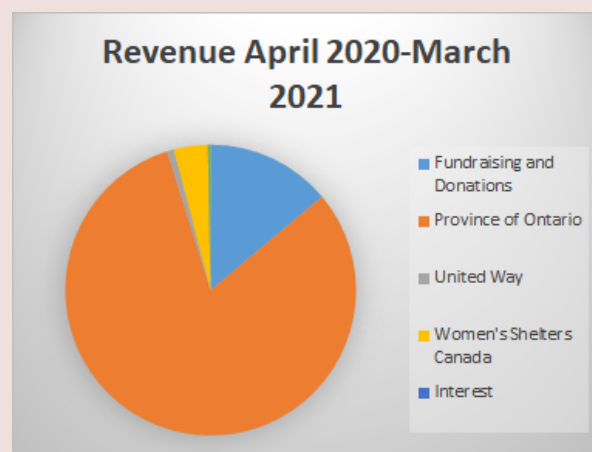
6 clients served via outreach services



Statement of Operations

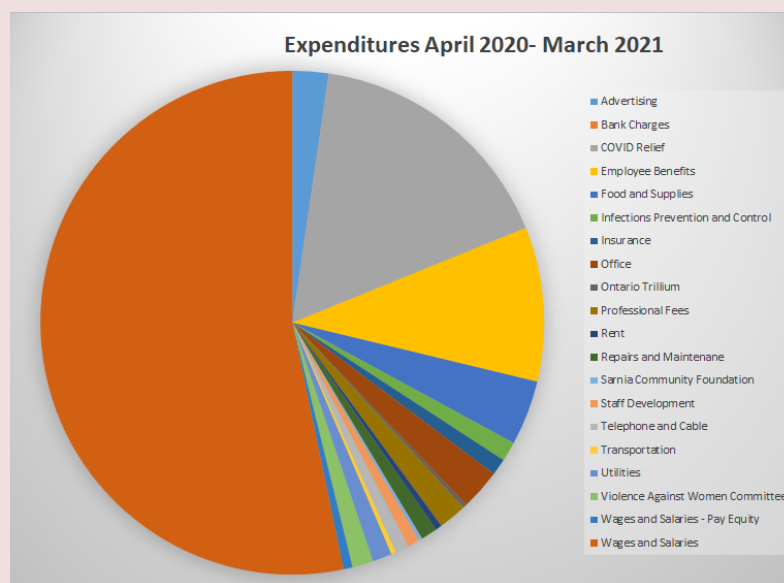
Revenue April 2020 - March 2021

REVENUE	
Fundraising and Donations	\$ 235,105.29
Province of Ontario	\$1,374,117.00
United Way	\$ 12,976.28
Women's Shelters Canada	\$ 63,677.00
Interest	\$ 876.62
Other	\$ 4,319.33
	\$1,691,071.52



Expenditures April 2020- March 2021

Advertising	\$ 34,556.00
Bank Charges	\$ 322.00
COVID Relief	\$ 247,118.00
Employee Benefits	\$ 148,208.00
Food and Supplies	\$ 62,184.00
Infections Prevention and Control	\$ 18,862.00
Insurance	\$ 15,823.00
Office	\$ 39,361.00
Ontario Trillium	\$ 3,630.00
Professional Fees	\$ 27,066.00
Rent	\$ 6,241.00
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 15,597.00
Sarnia Community Foundation	\$ 3,285.00
Staff Development	\$ 11,553.00
Telephone and Cable	\$ 13,186.00
Transportation	\$ 4,608.00
Utilities	\$ 18,482.00
Violence Against Women Committee	\$ 20,182.00
Wages and Salaries - Pay Equity	\$ 8,787.00
Wages and Salaries	\$ 796,388.00
	\$1,495,439.00



Transitional Support

The onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic proved to be a very challenging time for our clients to access services and secure housing. During the lockdown months, women were often unable to call for assistance as their children and abusive partners were also in the home providing a lack of privacy and unsafe conditions. When the lockdowns were lifted, there was an influx in woman reaching out for support as the community opened up, abusive partners returned to work, and women were able to find alternate reasons to leave the home so that they could attend the shelter for housing support.

Women continued their housing searches throughout the pandemic, however, they were presented with several barriers including the inability to view units based on lockdown restrictions, lack of affordable housing being available due evictions being on hold with the temporary closure of the Tribunal, and a general shortage of affordable housing in Sarnia-Lambton.



During this uncertain time, the transitional support counsellor had **118 women registered to the Residential and Non-Residential Programs**. Of these women, approximately **45** were able to secure their own units or return to the matrimonial home without their ex-partner. Approximately **25** women were able to secure temporary living arrangements with family/friends while they are waiting to secure permanent housing of their own. Approximately 10 women made the decision to return to their partners after receiving education and safety planning to do so. The remainder of the women served were either referred to another shelter in the community they wished to relocate to, or a more appropriate service such as detox at Bluewater Health or another long-term treatment facility or opted to discharge and not provide their future plans.



Social Programming: facilitated by CYC Veronica

Virtual Youth Relationship Program

The Youth Relationship Program is a co-ed program for high school aged youth. This is a proactive, early intervention program to empower and educate youth in our community to be knowledgeable leaders and advocates for themselves and others in an informed, compassionate and non-judgemental capacity. This program facilitates open, reflective discussions talking about the precipitating factors of domestic violence. Equipping youth to be able to recognize the signs of abuse, healthy relationships, effective communication, and learning about community resources that combat violence. Youth Relationship Program was adapted to be offered Virtually and gained lots of attention throughout our community this past January. With the virtual program adaptations this group also had participants from Lambton County, Windsor and Hamilton that otherwise would not have been able to participate for in-person group. Clients shared how this program equipped them to navigate relationships while they prepare and emerge into their adult life.



**Child and Youth
Counsellor: Veronica**

Mother's Support Group

Mother's Support Group is a group for mothers who have experienced domestic violence. This group discusses how violence impacts the family and parenting strategies to combat long term effects of violence and ending the cycle of family violence. This program is free of charge and accessible to residential and non-residential clients.

Virtual Kids Craft

The Kids Craft Group is a place for kids to be able to express themselves creatively, have fun and build connections. The Virtual Kids Craft Group was implemented during COVID lockdowns due to the effects the pandemic has had on children and their family's mental health. This created opportunities for children to interact with new kids in their community from their homes while also learning fun new crafts and practice their creative expression.



Notable Community Support

Aecon/ Nova Site Contractor... \$1595

After Hours Rotary.... \$5000

Arkona Lions club... \$1000

Advanced Building Materials... \$5000

Carpenters Local 1256... \$2000

Leadwave... \$4800

Local 663... \$2500

NGL Supply Ltd... \$5000

Royal Canadian Legion... \$1000

Sarnia 445 Club (Esso Social Club)... \$4300

Seaway Kiwanis... \$2000

Shoppers Drug Mart Foundation... \$17,589

St. Pauls Outreach... \$2000

Winners Merchants International... \$5000



Executive Director Summary

The April 1st 2020 to March 31st 2021 fiscal year held layers of adjustment and loss as well as openings for learning and change.

On a broader level we experienced COVID-19, and with it, increased cases of mental health challenges, substance abuse, intimate partner violence and femicide. By the end of July 2021, femicides in Ontario numbered 38, compared to 23 in the same period in 2020. At the Women's Interval Home of Sarnia-Lambton, we were above full capacity for eight weeks and at capacity for 4 weeks, stretching our resources as we maintained social distancing protocols. During COVID shutdowns, women were isolated in their homes with abusers, unable to reach help, and friends, family, and colleagues were equally unable to see early signs that would otherwise trigger an offer of support. Isolation and lack of contact leads to increased risk.

The staff, working with Executive Director Angie Marks , developed new COVID policies and procedures and worked tirelessly to keep residents and employees safe. In the background Patty Dummit, our Accounts Manager, balanced our funds and generous donations to meet the new COVID financial pressures. While in the process of reorganizing our kitchen and dining areas, Patrice Flett prepared healthy meals, which at one week reached 64 meals per day. Our direct support workers continue to pivot with changing COVID protocols, and training and preparing for new COVID related family breakdowns. These protocols remain in place as we begin a fourth wave and experience new COVID variants.

Continued...

Furthermore, the pandemic brought existing deep societal fissures into full view in a way that demands new conversations and new ways of being together as community. Along with increased intimate partner violence, abusers also traumatized Black, Indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQTT2SIQQ and other communities. These events have sparked conversations and acknowledgment that many abusers are traumatized victims themselves, and our need, as a community, to foster restorative and nurturing relationships to help heal all spirits, minds and bodies.

This year, as the new WIH Executive Director, I am looking forward to the development of our new Strategic Plan with the staff and our Board of Directors. Our new plans will first, build on the excellent work of our Board and Chair, Judy McKeegan, who has steered us through a difficult past year. Second, we build on past outstanding work aiding women who seek shelter, outreach work across Lambton County, transitional housing, and empowerment and youth engagement groups. We look forward to partnering with other social services to address individual and community violence, and address mental health and addiction issues. Finally, we aim to deepen our response to the culturally appropriate ways of healing with victims of intimate partner violence, to continue to support Jordan's Principle, and to build our efforts of reconciliation by following the 94 Calls-to-Action in our WIH work.

- Jennifer Vansteenkiste
Executive Director



**Enhancing personal dignity by working towards the
elimination of family violence.**

24 Hour Crisis and Support Line:

1-800-265-1412

681 Oxford St. Sarnia, ON N7T 7J7

www.womensintervalhome.com



@womensintervalhomesl



@womensintervalhome



@WIH2016

