Issued June 2019

Guelph Wellington Women in Crisis

2018 - 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

HIGHLIGHTS

1204
Women Supported

53
Children Supported

2989
Crisis Calls Taken

161
Public Education Events

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Our Collective Call to Action

*Sometimes a **call to action** is built over time, slowly, as we watch the consequences of inaction.*

*Sometimes a **call to action** happens in a moment, through a herstory, or an event that prevents us from standing on the sidelines and propels us to action.*

The dedicated employees and volunteers at Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis Shelter and Sexual Assault Centre have each followed their call to action as they work towards improving the lives of women and children, within this community and beyond.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who use their call to action to benefit WIC.

WIC has exceptional volunteers. These are people who assist in all program areas, who develop and implement policy, who oversee the organization's finances, and who support the mission and mandate of this organization year after year. Your hard work, commitment and contributions make it possible for WIC to be as successful as it is. We are also incredibly grateful to receive support from many donors, community members and organizations.

We are fortunate to have such devoted employees within this organization. The work could not be done without you. Staff have responded to many calls to action over the past year, as they do each and every day. Their professionalism and client service delivery is outstanding. The Board and Executive Director will endeavour to ensure that they have the training and the tools necessary to do their job.

We are fortunate to have a deeply committed and experienced Executive Director, Sly Castaldi, who has been our ED for fifteen years. Her expertise and knowledge is instrumental to the success of WIC. Sly ensures that the organization continues to move and grow in a forward motion. She has demonstrated her commitment to the VAW sector not just through her leadership at WIC, but also through her work at provincial and regional round tables.

At WIC, our vision is a bold call to action and our goal is to create a world where women and children live free of violence. As we move into the next year, we look forward to continuing to work through our strategic plan, strengthening our internal processes, and working with our community partners. We will continue to be leaders in the domestic violence and sexual assault sectors, fighting for a world free from both.

The WIC Board will be going through some significant changes this upcoming year. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express our appreciation to departing Board members – Belinda Leach, Patti Peters, Susan Brown, Arran Rowles and Melissa Boehner. We also welcome new Board members Kate Parizeau, Nanita Mohan, Heather Lane and Shelley White.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our gratitude to WIC's Executive Director, management team, staff, volunteers, community partners, funders, donors and friends, for all their tremendous efforts and resulting accomplishments. We thank you all.

***Sherree Derferd**, Board Chair*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

"Thirty Years and counting ..."

It is hard to believe that it has been 30 years since I walked into my first shift at Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis. I remember that day as if it were yesterday. I showed up at the shelter, which has now long been demolished. I rang the doorbell and was met by a couple of staff who showed me around. The shelter was old and worn and all the furniture looked like it had been donated. The rooms were functional but not very nice. It was a small space for all that lived and worked there but in those days we just made due. Much as it was for the women we served, those days were marked by being grateful for any kindness and support that came our way. Learning to stretch a dollar into two and figuring things out as we went along. I did not know that this work and this agency would become my life long passion. What a journey this has been and I had no idea how much this work would change me.

So much has happened since that first shift. I remember waking up the morning of Dec 6th, 1989 to the news that 14 young women were gunned down at École Polytechnique. It was horrifying. It was hard to make sense of anything. There was incredible outrage that became a call to action that galvanized a nation. Violence against women organizations across this country demanded action and an end to the violence. December 6th made the issue of femicide no longer deniable and we have been keeping a list of the women we have lost each year since. This year will be the 30th anniversary of that tragic day.

Here we are 30 years later and #MeToo did the same for sexual violence that Dec. 6th did for femicide. No longer deniable or tolerable. Both of these events have marked my work in ways I cannot even begin to describe. So much happened between 1989 and 2019.

Throughout this time, there have been so many changes, so many victories in the midst of some devastating losses. Yet, we have continued to move the needle forward in a consistent and painstaking way. The funding has increased, never to the levels that is required but always better than it was. The legal changes have made things better for women, but true justice still feels outside of our reach. The systems have become more responsive to women, yet the road ahead is still long. We have made some gains with respect to equality rights, but we still have work to do.

The agency under the leadership of so many incredible women, who came before me, grew each year. We went from that old shelter, that I first walked into, to the 28-bed shelter that now stands in public view in the center of town. We went from hiding in the shadows to being highly visible in our community. We were once a small group of fierce feminists working mostly alone in the face of great resistance, to a large group of dedicated staff, volunteers and community partners who work with us every day.

We added new programs to WIC, the Transitional and Housing Support program, Family Court Support program and lastly our Anti-Human Trafficking program. We painstakingly renovated and moved many times through these years. We went from paper files and counting everything by hand to computers, email and cell phones. We spent many years soliciting outside of stores to selling t-shirts and baked goods to a highly successful must attend Gala. The changes have been phenomenal, but what has remained constant is WIC's ability to respond to the changing needs of the clients who experience various forms of violence.

We have been fortunate to have so many brilliant and dedicated women who have worked to end violence against women and children. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this agency past and present. A special thank you to all the staff, management team, volunteers and the Board of Directors. Together we do amazing work. Thank you for bringing your best self in service of others.

Thank you to all of our community partners who work with us everyday to help women and their children. Thank you to all of our donors, supporters and champions. Without your steadfast support, we would not be able to do what we do.

It has been an honour and a privilege to be a part of this organization. I have appreciated the opportunity to take this walk down memory lane. It helps to see how far we have come. It is important to acknowledge the milestones and the hard work that has brought us here. Now, more than ever, we need to continue to work to protect the gains we have made while still advocating for change. Our work continues until the violence stops, when true equality for all has been achieved.

With gratitude,
Sly Castaldi, Executive Director

PROGRAM REPORTS

Volunteer Services and Crisis Line

Volunteers support many agency activities giving their time and resources to make a difference in the lives of women and children in our community. So many of our programs are supported by our wonderful volunteers, whether you sit on our fabulous Gala committee, accompany women to family court, work awareness and fundraising events, organize the donation room or sit with our Anti-Human Trafficking blanket as it travels across Guelph and Wellington County, the work you do is vital. Without the passion of our wonderful volunteers we wouldn't have the Crisis Line, the Pets in Transition program, or Take back the Night, volunteers truly make up the fabric of who we are.

One of our Family Court Support Volunteers spoke of the impact volunteering;

"*Volunteering with Women in Crisis is a constant learning experience that can lead to a win-win situation. As women we gain strength from each other!" - Donna Madore*

We are stronger because of our volunteers! Thank you for all you do!

Jacinta Cassidy, Crisis Line Manager & Volunteer Coordinator

4324.25

Volunteer Hours

2989

Crisis Line Support

Marianne's Place (MP)

The shelter supported a higher number of preschool children this past year, which brought lots of energy to the shelter. Specifically, 60% of the children were under 5 years of age, 34% were between 5-10 years and 5% were between 13-17 years.

With the high number of young children in the shelter, we were especially pleased to receive year-end enhancement funds to support children in the shelter. We were able to use this money to partner with Family Counselling & Support Service, who provided a counsellor one evening a week to meet with the children. Additionally we were able to acquire some new resources to enhance our programming with the children. The resources focused on developmental, sensory & calming activities, as well as resources on emotions and safety.

The shelter has been full all year and we are continuing to see the need for women and families to stay for longer periods of time; due to complex support needs and the housing crisis in our community. One key area of support that tripled this past year, was the number of times we engaged interpreters to support our clients. Through interpreters we were able to support women in over 8 different languages.

We are proud to announce we have recently partnered with Canadian Mental Health Association, to have a counsellor at the shelter for 2 half days a week. Providing mental health support and counselling to the women at the shelter. This is helping to bridge our programs and provide an important support need. This collaboration has been very well received by women.

Christine Wilson, Residential Program Manager

75 **Women Supported**

53 **Children Supported**

Sexual Assault Centre (SAC)

In response to the #metoo movement which elicited discussion of sexual harassment and abuse across the globe and brought these issue front and centre in every social media forum, the Sexual Assault Centre designed and ran a "Self Care in the Era of #metoo" workshop in order to support survivors with the constant inundation of triggers due to overexposure. The workshop attendance was beyond original capacity, and outcomes were described as beyond their expectations. Numbers attending group programming doubled as word of effectiveness of the programming spread. The strength of our community partnerships were demonstrated in our "Clothesline Project", where t-shirts were distributed throughout the community for people to write supportive messages for survivors to show their support. Seventeen t-shirts complete with anonymous community messages hung proudly outside of the main office while several more were displayed throughout the agency.

CLIENT QUOTE:

"I originally came to try and balance my survivor issues better so I could start to live my life…..WIC taught me that my life includes my survivor issues but that I had choice to manage them not the other way around."

Jennifer Davies, Manager of Programs and Services

170 **Women Supported**

Rural Women's Support Program (RWSP)

227 Women Supported

Community partnership and outreach continue to be a necessary focus of our work in the Rural Women's Support Program. We have a place at important tables such as the Wellington County Connectivity table, supporting those at risk in Wellington County, and the OPP Regional Victim Response Committee with other justice and victim support partners to review sexual assault cases in our region.

RWSP partnered with The Legal Clinic to provide 2 legal clinics a month at our county offices from February through July this year. We partnered with the OPP and our Anti-Human Trafficking counsellor to provide training on Human Trafficking to other service providers in our community. RWSP co-facilitates Strengthening Families with partners from CMHA, Wellington County, F&CS and the Family Health Team. We continue to provide educational speaks and presentations at local high schools, service clubs and team meetings.

The Rural Women's Support Program continues to write and have articles published in the county newspapers and magazines. We participate in interviews via local radio and social media in order to stay visible and connected to our community.

Jacinta Cassidy, Rural Women's Support Program Manager

Family Court Support Program (FCSP)

250 Women Supported

Due to the growing number of participants in the Family Court Support program, strengthening relationships with community partners has been a focus this year. An invaluable resources that has been forged is the connection with the Mom's Group at the Shelldale Community Centre. The Family Court Support Counsellor has been a guest speaker in this group to share information about Family law rights, the impacts of Domestic and Sexual violence in Ontario and an overview of the process of navigating the Family Court System. Due to the diversity of this group, this information has reached women who otherwise may not have had access to it through safe and confidential settings. Additionally, we have received a dramatic increase in referrals from Legal Aid lawyers who have a dedication to a collaborative, wrap around approach to support women through an often traumatic justice process.

CLIENT QUOTE:

"I could not, and would not have survived this process without my Family Court Worker."

Jennifer Davies, Manager of Programs and Services

Transitional Housing and Support Program (THSP)

440 Women Supported

The pace of the Transitional Housing and Support Program could be only described as an organized, energetic frenzy. The number of women supported this year has been record breaking with the emphasis of community collaboration being a primary factor in helping women navigate their way to safety. Due to emergency shelters being at capacity for longer periods of time, we have relayed heavily on joint initiatives with the Police and housing to help expedite women and children fleeing violence. Participating on the Elder Abuse Coordinating Committee and working closely with the Seniors at Risk Coordinator of CMHA, we have been able to secure emergency shelter within retirement homes for many older women, that would otherwise have no place to go. Despite the overwhelming numbers and the numerous systemic barriers, women continue to share that they feel wrapped in support and hopeful due to the advocacy and care of the services they receive.

CLIENT QUOTE:

"I was ashamed to come to WIC at first. Now, I hold my head high because my counsellor help me feel good about myself again. I will never compromise myself again."

Jennifer Davies, Manager of Programs and Services

Anti-Human Trafficking Program (HT)

The Anti-Human Trafficking Program has experienced immense growth this year in client numbers, outreach, collaboration and education. A true highlight was the "It Takes a Knitwork" campaign. In order to visually demonstrate community support and collaborative partnerships "wrapping around" a trafficked person, a call for 8x8 knitted squares was put out to the community in order to create a collaborative blanket of support. We hoped for 500 squares and we received well over 2000 squares from local people, county people, across the province and even as far as British Columbia. With the help of community artists, individuals and groups, random squares became a beautiful experiential art piece which was displayed on International Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Several smaller blankets have been given to clients to remind them that they are cared for and that the community believes in them.

42 **Women Supported**

CLIENT QUOTE:

"I was moved to tears when I saw the blanket, because nobody in that room knew that it was made for people like me."

Jennifer Davies, Manager of Programs and Services

Fundraising and Communications

This year has been marked with tremendous success we are pleased to announce that GWWIC has met our fundraising goal for the first time ever! For this year's fiscal ending March 31st 2019, we were successful in raising $290,000 to support our total operating budget. On behalf of the organization and the women and children we support, we would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who made this possible. Thank you to all of our generous donors, all of those who donated their time and energy to planning events and various third party fundraisers, those who sponsored our Gala, and caring community members who always keep us top of mind and donate what they can. Every single dollar counts and we are incredibly fortunate to have the support of both the Guelph and Wellington County communities.

Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis continues to increase and improve our online presence including our social media presence. We have grown our followers on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter through mainly organic social media posts and creating content calendars to schedule posts. Our presence continues to grow steadily and has become a wonderful platform to disseminate information as well as for donor recognition and stewardship.

Justine Morgan, Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator

Public Education

Our annual events continue to run and new events and partnerships have increased the participation and community support for events ending gender-based violence. International Women's Day, Women on the Bridge, Sexual Assault Prevention Month, Take Back the Night, Sisters in Spirit, Women Abuse Awareness Month, 16 Days of Action Against Gender-based Violence, and December 6th are known days in our community and remain relevant in our effort to engage our community in social justice. Collaboration with The University of Guelph's CESI, has equipped us with resources to research and evaluate our public education services to assure the best possible outcome and social change in our community.

With the establishment of the Indigenous Wellness Program in Guelph, we have been able to partner on the delivery of Beauty within Ashes; an Indigenous healing program created by Alaska Natives, focused on ending sexual and domestic violence in the next generation. With the political shift in our province, our Public Educator has experienced an increase in educators and students taking it upon themselves to seek out information and resources around consent, healthy relationships and sexual violence prevention. Supporting student lead projects, protests and discussions has been inspiring.

Public education will be increasingly important as we continue to address the increase in conversation, awareness and support of ending gender-based violence.

Important reminder:

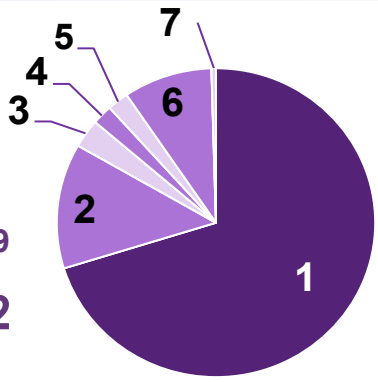
Take Back the Night: Thursday, September 26, 2019
30th Anniversary of December 6; Montreal massacre

Jessica St. Peter, Public Educator

Financial Report

Revenues 2018/2019

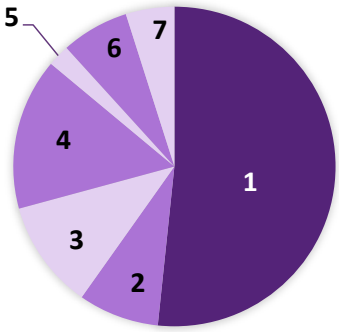
$3,335,672



1. Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services	$2,342,349
2. Ministry of the Attorney General	436,840
3. Wellington County Social Services	99,518
4. Special Projects	68,584
5. United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin	72,223
6. Donations/Fundraising	300,950
7. Other	15,208

Expenditures 2018/2019

$3,111,053



1. Shelter, Crisis Line and Volunteer Program	$1,606,799
2. Transitional & Housing Support Program	252,328
3. Rural Women's Support Program	342,081
4. Sexual Assault Centre & Family Court Support Program	477,731
5. Special Projects	68,584
6. Administration	211,904
7. Capital	151,626

A complete set of audited statements is available upon request by calling 519-836-1110 ext 224.

Contact

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Twitter: @gwwic

Guelph Wellington Women in Crisis

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SLATE FOR 2019-2020

Returning to Complete Second Year of Third Term:

Sherree Derferd worked for over 28 years with the Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services and retired in 2006. She oversaw the development of a new program for women who came into contact with the law. Sherree became the Ministry's Lead for the Ontario Domestic Violence Action Plan with the mandate of developing comprehensive strategies to protect women and children from domestic violence. Sherree had been superintendent of four correctional institutions over her career. She now teaches at the University of Guelph and Guelph-Humber in the Political Science and Justice Studies Departments; many of her courses incorporate domestic violence research into the curriculum with the intention of informing young adults about the seriousness of this issue. Sherree has volunteered with Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis for several years. Additionally, she has been an active volunteer with The John Howard Society, Soroptomist International and Hospice Wellington.

Returning to Complete Second Year of Second Term:

Neta Gear is experienced in areas of mental health, addictions, domestic violence, child welfare, brain injury and health care. She has held front line and management positions with Waterloo Family & Children's Services, Family Transition Place, Peel Supportive Housing, Reconnect, Traverse Independence and Mississauga Halton Community Care Access Centre in addition to teaching at Sheridan College. Neta has volunteered with Big Sisters Peel, Upper Grand District School Board, Guelph Salvation Army and sits on the Board of Coalition for Persons with Disabilities. Her education includes a Masters in Education and Leadership, a Social Work & a Social Science undergraduate degrees plus Family Mediation and Project Management certifications. Neta seeks to contribute her skills and knowledge to a community organization that furthers the goal of ending violence and promoting inclusion in our society. She hopes to develop new skills and knowledge as she broadens her horizons. GW-WIC provides such an opportunity; it has been providing excellent service to women and children in the Guelph Wellington area for over 40 years, aspiring to be inclusive.

Sarah Gillies has been employed with the Regional Municipality of Waterloo since 2009 and was initially hired as a caseworker for administering Ontario Works assistance. Currently in her role as Case Presenting Officer for Quality Assurance in Community Services, she attends Administrative Tribunal hearings to defend appeals pertaining to social assistance decisions. Prior to working in Community Services, Sarah worked with marginalized children and families for Kinark Child & Family Services and Avalon Children's Residence. Sarah also worked for the Centre for Students with Disabilities at the University of Guelph, where she ultimately obtained her undergraduate degree in Sociology. Integral with her commitment to feminism, she volunteers for Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis in a continued effort to advocate for the prevention of violence against women and children. Women's liberation branches out to all avenues of Sarah's life and is a fundamental aspect of instilling equality in her daughters' lives.

Vanessa Miller has worked in public accounting in Guelph for over ten years and received her CPA designation in 2005. Vanessa has considerable experience working with not for profit organizations in her capacity as a CPA and through her volunteer experience, which includes accounting, auditing, taxation and governance.

Returning to Complete Second Year of First Term:

Jennifer Trommelen-Jones is a lawyer with SV Law at the Elora office. She practices in the areas of corporate and commercial law, real estate, and wills and estates, and often works with not-for-profit organizations and charities to help meet their varying needs. Jennifer obtained her law degree from the University of Ottawa, taking courses in access to justice; landlord and tenant law; sexuality, gender and the law; and law and psychiatry, as well as advanced corporate taxation and business organizations courses. Prior to attending law school, Jennifer obtained a Masters degree and an Honours Bachelor degree in European Studies from the University of Guelph. She is also a Board Member on the Research and Ethics Board at the University of Guelph. Jennifer grew up in Fergus, and is pleased to be part of an organization doing so much to empower women, promote equality, and end gender-based violence in our community.

Kaitlyn Armstrong is an Associate Lawyer in the Family Law Practice Group at SV Law. Kaitlyn holds a Juris Doctor, a Master of Arts in Political Science, and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Political Science from the University of Western Ontario. While attending law school, Kaitlyn was an Executive Member of the Student Legal Society, Co-Chair of the Community Outreach Committee and a Caseworker at Community Legal Services. After returning to Guelph, Kaitlyn joined the Have a Heart for Kids' Sake Gala Committee and the United Way GenNext Committee. Guelph is Kaitlyn's hometown and she is happy to live, work and support positive change in the community.

Board of Directors Slate ... *Continued*

Standing for Election for First Year of Third Term:

Andrea Roberts is currently the Director of Family Health at Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health. She has worked in a number of health units holding both frontline Public Health Nurse and numerous management positions for 30 over years. Andrea has a strong lifelong commitment to serving vulnerable and marginalized populations and believes that the work and mandate of public health is strategically aligned with that of G-W WIC to which she offers her strength in leadership, project management, evidence informed decision making and conflict resolution. She has experience with a variety of community partnerships, coalitions, networks and boards including the Family Violence Prevention Network. Andrea is also personally committed to the stand against domestic violence. As a single parent of three young adults, one with special needs, and the friend of a woman recently murdered by her partner, she strongly promotes violence prevention, equity and dignity for all.

Standing for Election for First Year of First Term:

Kate Parizeau is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Guelph. She studies "The Social Life of Waste," and leads research projects investigating food waste, informal recycling, and waste management policy and planning. Kate is a community-engaged scholar, and is committed to conducting research that fosters social and environmental justice. Themes in her work include urban inequality, environmental justice, and feminist geographies. As an educator, she also researches and advocates for the mental health concerns of students in higher education. Kate has previous volunteer experience with organizations that seek to eliminate gender-based violence, including The Redwood (Toronto) and PACE Society (Vancouver).

Heather Lane is the Executive Director at the Ontario Universities' Application Centre, after a long career in student affairs at three Ontario universities, including the University of Guelph. She has served as President of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services and has extensive experience in the management of the programs, services, facilities, finances and human resources. Heather most recently served as the Vice Provost, Students at Ryerson University where in addition to managing a large portfolio of administrative units, she wrote, and was responsible for implementation of, the university's Sexual violence policy, after extensive consultation with campus stakeholders in its development. Over the course of her career, Heather had the opportunity to build supports and services for, and work directly with, vulnerable students struggling to better their lives through education, while managing all manner of personal, systemic and financial barriers and crises. Before leaving Ryerson, she was presented with the President's Blue and Gold Award of Staff Excellence.

Nanita Mohan is a lecturer with the Department of Political Science at University of Guelph and University of Guelph-Humber. Her courses focus on Canadian politics and Canadian public administration. Nanita was a volunteer and an Executive Board member for 10 years with the Guelph and District Multicultural Festival and is currently serving as a board member with Rotary Guelph. Her volunteer experience extends beyond Canada including working with underprivileged women, rural women's empowerment projects, and gender-based health care programs in Malaysia and India. She has also organized and coordinated global book drives for underprivileged schools in India and plans to continue with a similar program in Africa.

Shelley White is currently employed with Skyline Group of Companies in Guelph where her role is centred around client relationship building. Her previous long tenured 28 year career was with RBC within many divisions of the company. Shelley holds her Personal Financial Planning certification as well as her most recent Exempt Market Designation. Shelley was the Chair of the Board of the Sexual Assault Support of Waterloo Region for 3 years all the while volunteering on the Crisis Line for survivors of sexual violence. Her most recent volunteer role was the Treasurer of KW Counselling with a tenure of 3 years. Shelley lives in Guelph with her partner and together they have four children, one grandchild and another on the way! They enjoy tennis and golf.

Members Leaving the Board:

Mellissa Boehler
Belinda Leach
Susan Brown
Arran Rowles
Patricia Peters