

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Guelph - Wellington Women in Crisis

Highlights



1260

Women Supported



82

Children Supported



2,144

Crisis Calls Taken



152

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.

This year we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of WIC, an organization whose sole purpose is to play an active role in creating a world where women and children live free of violence. Forty years ago the second wave of feminism was well underway, with women organizing to improve conditions for women in society. The ethos of the time was about empowering women and the call to action was at work on several levels.

This movement raised the consciousness of a core group of University of Guelph students who asked "what can we do to help?" They responded to the call to action in a powerful way. Through the U of G Student Association, they began a Rape Crisis Centre in 1977. This involved the creation of a Sexual Assault Crisis Line and educational training packages, allowing the core group to go into classrooms and provide students with an understanding and knowledge about rape and the myths surrounding it. The success of this initiative led them into the community where they were able to provide education to the broader sector.

From these actions, they became aware of a larger community need - the struggles of women and children who were victims of domestic violence. Their initial call to action and commitment to the betterment of women expanded and they began helping victims of domestic violence. Through many community partnerships and outreach activities, they secured funding to launch the first shelter for women and children in the City of Guelph in 1978.

The debt we owe this core group is immense. They were trailblazers who built a solid foundation for WIC's 40 years of growth. On this important anniversary, we celebrate their hard work and many successes.

WIC has expanded its services and programs greatly since 1977/78. Some of the important milestones include:

1982 – Sexual Assault Services began

1986 – Rural Women's Services began

Marianne's Place expands from 12 to 18 beds

1992 – Marianne's Place moved to its current location

2000 – Transitional & Housing Support Program began

2008 – WIC moved to 38 Elizabeth Street

2010 – WIC wins Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction

2011 – Family Court Support Program began

These milestones are important and noteworthy but it is equally important to celebrate the many Calls to Action to which WIC has responded over the past 14,600 days - ...day in and ... day out. The call to action this past year has been strong, within the agency and outside of it, and we continue to commit to our vision from the past and look forward to our future evolution. On the occasion of our 40th Anniversary and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank WIC's Executive Director, staff, management team, volunteers, community partners, funders, donors, friends and especially the original core group of women for all of their tremendous efforts and resulting accomplishments. Our vision is a bold call to action; we know that in order for us to create a world where women and children live free of violence, we need a bold collective response.

Sherree Derferd, Board Chair



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

"Nevertheless, she persisted."

Time flies when you are trying to change the world. This is a special year for Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis as we mark the 40th Anniversary of this incredible organization and the journey to get here. We have come a long way.

We started from very humble beginnings; a handful of young women with a burning desire to do something about sexual violence began a crisis line at the University of Guelph. Breaking the silence on sexual and domestic violence back then was a profound act of resistance and courage. I can only imagine the backlash they experienced. Lucky for us, they persisted and kept on going.

Back then it was not like today; there was very little awareness and support for women who had experienced any form of violence. There was no Wear Purple Day in support of survivors; there were no I Believe Survivors campaigns; there was no funding and the work ahead must have felt so daunting. Yet they persisted and kept going. We owe our founding sisters a heartfelt thank you for their bravery and determination and for laying the foundation to what has become a formidable presence for social change in our community.

Our story has had many highlights through the years and I would like to acknowledge the following milestones in our herstory: In 1978 we opened the first shelter for women who were experiencing domestic violence. In 1982 we expanded supports for women who were experiencing sexual violence. In 1986 we started the Rural Women's Support Program. In 1992 we built our new shelter. In 1993 Marianne's Park was opened and dedicated to Marianne Goulden. In 2000 we started the Transitional & Housing Support Program. In 2008 we purchased 38 Elizabeth Street which houses our urban non-residential programs. In 2011 we started the Family Court Support Program and in 2015 the Provincial Government announced an Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harrassment and established the first ever Permanent Round-table on Violence Against Women.

And through all of these milestones, we continued to march, to protest and to organize vigils honouring women who had been killed, while serving thousands of women who walk through our doors every year. We lobbied, we advocated, we were part of endless campaigns to bring about change and improve the lives of women and children. We sold T-shirts, held car washes, bake sales and tag days to raise funds. We planned, strategized, flip charted all of our amazing ideas and processed everything so that everyone felt heard. We challenged ourselves and each other to be more inclusive. We kept learning and unlearning and acknowledged our failures while working to do and be better. We worked hard to build our movement; we worked through our struggles and soaked in our triumphs. As the torch was passed from our founding sisters, each new generation of women who have been part of building WIC also continued to persist!

They say, if you want to get somewhere fast walk alone, but if you want to get far walk with others. We could not have accomplished what we did these last 40 years without the incredible support of our community. To our champions, funders, donors, supporters and friends: you keep us company on our journey and we are grateful for you ongoing support. To our community partners, thank you for helping to make our community and the systems we work in better for women and children. Change takes many hands and hearts – thank you for helping to carry the load.

I want to pay tribute to all of the volunteers and students both past and present. We were created from this spirit and you built a strong foundation of kindness and generosity that sustains us to this day.

I want to honour all of the women who have worked very hard on behalf of WIC. To all staff past and present, you have helped thousands of women navigate through the labyrinth of systems. Each and every day you have worked hard to make this a better world. You have made and continue to make a difference. With fierce grace and unwavering commitment you have given the gifts of hope and strength to so many women. Thank you for all of your hard work.

I want to acknowledge the courage of the thousands of women and children who have been served by WIC. Thank you for placing your trust in our hands. I hope that we continue to serve you with all that our best selves have to offer. Our movements were built by and for survivors of violence and we hope that we have honoured that responsibility with the highest standards.

Margaret Mead said it best when she said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." She could have been talking about us.

As we reflect on the past 40 years, it has been an incredible journey of struggle, survival, resilience, building and sustaining. But what matters most now is what we do next. As we look to the future, we hang onto the hope of ending violence against women and children and in the meantime, we persist to work for change.

On a personal note, this work has felt like a calling and it has been an honour and privilege to serve as Executive Director. I am deeply proud of the work that this organization has and continues to accomplish. May the spirit that created us continue to motivate us until there is no more violence.

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. This is what Deb Ecclestone, long time volunteer, had to say about her experience: "We cannot do everything at once; we can do something at once." I like this quote. I don't do my work or volunteering thinking all can be fixed or solved...not my place to do this for others but I can offer a 'something' to help them in their journey; perhaps an emotional conduit." And the WIC staff and crisis line experience gives me an avenue to do so." We are very grateful for all that Deb has generously contributed to WIC over the past 15 years. For the crisis line, we took 2,144 calls. Volunteers and staff spent a total of 473.75 hours supporting women on the crisis line.



Marianne's Place (MP)

This year the shelter has continued to integrate the new shelter standards set by the Ministry of Community & Social Services. A new service model of support was initiated, which included a revamp of our intake, service planning and group programming. The recent changes have been adopted to ensure that our services are more responsive to the complex needs of the women and children residing at the shelter. Some new challenges we face are supporting clients who have been sexually exploited or are victims of human trafficking.

As we strive to stay current and responsive to the community's needs through our services, we are also working to improve our facility on the outside. This past year, the shelter has benefited by physical improvements including a new roof, fence repairs and landscaping.

Christine Wilson, Residential Program Manager

113 Women supported



82 Children supported



Sexual Assault Centre (SAC)

A major highlight for SAC this year was the development and implementation of our trauma informed workshops and group programming. Due to being short staffed, these initiatives have been on hold for some time and finally had the opportunity to be facilitated this year with great success. One client bravely shared "I was as close to death as I could be. They (WIC) were my last hope. They saved me and showed me a life worth living."

Jennifer Davies, Manager of Programs and Services

177 Women supported



Rural Women's Support Program (RWSP)

Community partnership and outreach continue to be a necessary focus of our work. RWSP sits on a number of community committees including the Wellington County Connectivity Table and Strengthening Families. We continue to provide educational speaks and presentations for local groups, community partners and service clubs. RWSP continues to have articles published in county newspapers and interviews on local radio (101.1fm The Grand Radio).

Jacinta Cassidy, Rural Women's Support Program Manager

241 Women supported



Family Court Support Program (FCSP)

Another first for WIC! The staff of the FCSP were able to facilitate a two day Skype session for a woman who had experienced extreme domestic violence to tell her story to an arbitrator hearing her case from another province. The woman experienced severe anxiety about the possibility of having to face her ex partner despite expenses being covered for her to attend the session in the other province. Through careful advocacy and providing information of the impacts of trauma, the arbitrator was receptive to the Skype strategy and the woman was able to articulate her experiences and answer questions with support in non-intimidating and familiar surroundings.

Jennifer Davies, Manager, Clinical Programs and Services

187 Women supported



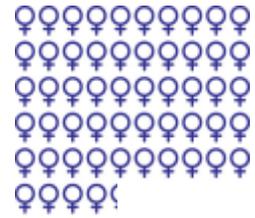
PROGRAM REPORTS *continued*

Transitional & Housing Support Program (THSP)

THSP continues to strive to ensure that there is "no wrong door" for any woman who has experienced violence. Our Senior Transitional Support Counsellor is now trained in the It's Not Right! Neighbours, Friends and Families for Older Adults and has been providing training to other community agencies. THSP has a long history of supporting elder women and is now able to share our knowledge to help others recognize the warning signs of abuse of older women and respond supportively and safely. This has assisted our desire for continued community collaboration and increased awareness that violence affects all demographics. As one older woman stated "I had believed that it was too late to change until (my counsellor) helped me believe I was worth it."

Jennifer Davies, Manager, Clinical Programs and Services

542 Women supported



FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS

Our Gala sponsors helped to make this year's Gala the most successful ever. Thanks to Bird Elinesky Schuett, TD Bank, The Auctionista, HR Entertainment, Intrigue Media, Italian Canadian Club, Westjet, Smith Valeriotte, Platters Catering, Puresource, Marg Donaldson, Jain Dental, Valentini Hair Design, Bill & Leslie McTaggart, Dean-Thackeray Roofing, RLB Chartered Accountants, Gary & Wynne Christie, Village of Arbour Trails, Eggcetra, Jason P. Evans - BDO Canada, Erb & Erb Insurance Brokers, Fleuristic Garden & Flower Studio, Brandon Marsh Photography, snapd Guelph, New Life Cabinetry, Polycon and Wall-Custance Funeral Home. A big shout out also to the fantastic work of the Gala Committee.

Many thanks to Robin-Lee Norris & David Halls, Shoppers Drug Mart Tree of Life Campaign, Royal City Realty Royal LePage Garage Sale, Charles Johnson Charitable Fund, Curl for a Cause, Puresource, Vagina Monologues and the Guelph Community Foundation for their support throughout the year. A heartfelt thank you to all of our donors for your support. You are helping to transform the lives of women and children in our community.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue \$3,131,021

Ministry of Community & Social Services	\$2,075,162
Ministry of the Attorney General	436,840
Special Projects	265,116
Donations/Fundraising	166,041
Wellington County Social Services	113,121
United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin	72,223
Other Income	2,518

Expenditures \$2,956,955

Shelter, Crisis Line and Volunteer Program	\$1,300,242
Sexual Assault Centre/Family Court Support Program	414,521
Rural Women's Support Program	346,425
Administration	220,023
Transitional & Housing Support Program	260,226
Capital	150,402
Special Projects	265,116

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

CONTACT



Administration Office: 38 Elizabeth Street, Guelph, ON



Phone: 519-836-1110



Agency Email: adminrec@gwwomenincrisis.org



Web Site: www.gwwomenincrisis.org



Mail: G-W Women in Crisis, PO Box 1451, Guelph ON N1H 6N9



Facebook: [Facebook.com/gwwomenincrisis](https://www.facebook.com/gwwomenincrisis)



Twitter: @gwwic

You don't have to be hit to be hurt.

You don't have to leave to get help.

You don't have to be in crisis to call.

**Call our Crisis Line
519-836-5710, 1-800-265-SAFE**

