



Women's House *Serving Bruce & Grey*

2019/20 Annual Report



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Vision

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

Mission Statement

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

Principles

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

Our Services

In-House Safe Shelter

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

24-hour Support Lines

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

Child Witness Program

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

Outreach Counselling

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

Group Counselling

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

Sexual Assault Services

- Confidential support of women sixteen (16) years of age and older who have been sexually assaulted recently or in the past

Transitional and Housing Support

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

Community Development

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

Volunteer Services

- Opportunities to volunteer throughout the organization

Second Stage Housing Program

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



Violence Against
Women Services



Women and
Children Centre



Outreach
Support



Wheelchair
Accessible



LGBT
support

Board of Directors 2019/2020

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Chair | Tracy Primeau |
| Vice Chair | Meag Durkin |
| Treasurer | Amanda Friesen |
| Secretary | Rachel Stack |
| Director | Colleen Hamann |
| Director | Joanna Malott |
| Director | Gavin Fick |
| Director | Gretel Steinberg |
| Director | Judy Rich |
| Director | Angela McOrmond |
| Director | Christine John |

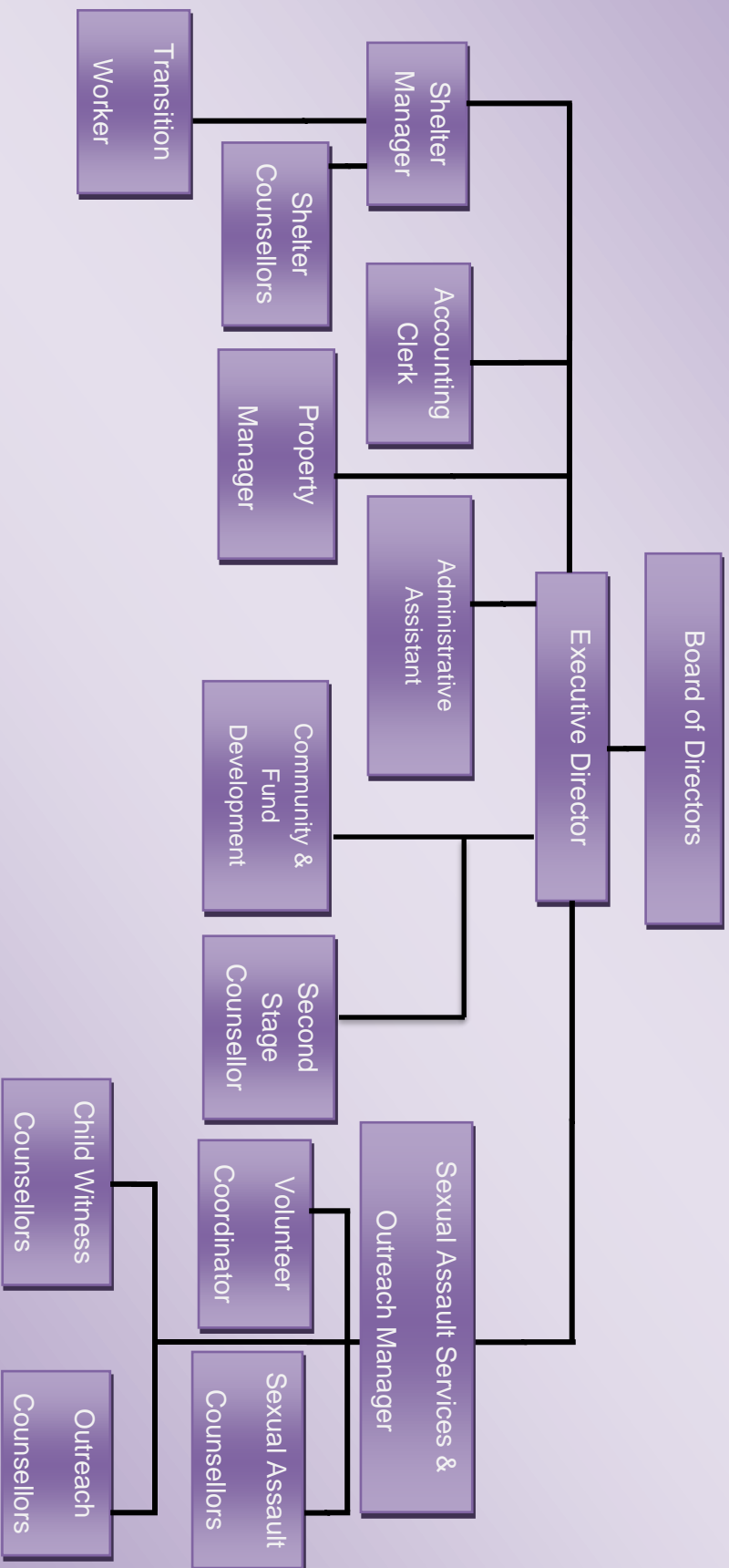
Women's House Statistics 2019/2020

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Women Served | 938 |
| Children Served | 224 |
| Crisis & Support Calls | 10,619 |
| Volunteer Hours | 1,080 |

The number of women receiving service increased over 15% this year compared to 2018/19, when 810 women received service

Women's House saw an increase of almost 2,000 crisis & support calls in 2019/20, up nearly 23% compared to the previous year

Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey Organizational Chart



Donors 2019/2020



Thank you to the Women's House Sponsors

CHAMPIONS

Bruce Power
Innovation at work

POWER WORKERS' UNION

United Way Bruce Grey
Change starts here.

Ontario Trillium Foundation
An Agency of the Government of Ontario
Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

SOCIETY of UNITED PROFESSIONALS
IPPE 140

INNOVATORS

McDougall ENERGY

LOCAL 2222

CANADA FOUNDATION

Bruce Telecom
Technology and Community

Larry Bannerman FOUNDATION

Kincardine Women's TRIATHLON

FRIENDS

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GREY BRUCE

100 Years Women Who Care

ROYAL LePAGE Keith & Linda Battler

KINECTRICS

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

GREENFIELD GLOBAL

MODUS
strategic solutions

the co-operators
Jennifer Cook & Associates

Kincardine Duplicate BRIDGE CLUB

KINCARDINE

LATE BIRSON LEARNING

nwmo
NORTH WEST ONTARIO MOUNTAIN ORIENTEERING ASSOCIATION

CONTRIBUTORS

The BRUCE

Trillium

MILLER
MULTI-SECTOR SOLUTIONS

PROMOTION MUCIOT

CHENY ISLAND FARM BUTCHER

UNIFOR
The Union Connection

Kim Conroy's Ladies & Dudes Kiwanis Club

Matchett Financial Services

RBC

Shoppers Drug Mart

SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Media Sponsors 2019/2020

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Saugeentimes.com | My FM | Bayshore Broadcasting |
| Kincardine Record | Kincardine Independent | Saugeen Shores Hub |
| 98 the Beach | | Wightman Telecom |

Annual Reports



Tracy Primeau, Board Chair

Annual Report 2019-2020

Women's House Serving Bruce and Grey welcomed new Board members this year and some changes to our Executive team. Board orientation took place at the end of summer and included an introduction to our strategic plan, currently in year two.

The many services we provide are funded by either the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services or the Ministry of Attorney General. However, we would not be able to offer the current level of service we provide to the counties of Bruce and Grey without our many corporate and individual donors. This number one focus of our strategic plan to build solid, sustainable funding with our neighbours in our communities has been a success in its first year. As well as our corporate partners we also host, partner and participate in both fundraising and awareness events celebrating our communities and their outstanding support. Once again this year, "Walk a Mile" was a great success and the gala offered some great and innovative costumes while at the same time showing our appreciation to our many sponsors. We were able to once again co-host our International Women's Day event with Business to Bruce and heard another motivational speaker.

I would like to thank all of our Management and Staff for not only continuing with the important work they do every day but also supporting our strategic plan initiatives. Our next focus will be on communication and I thank our Executive Director and the communications committee for developing that plan.

This year Women's House has been challenged as has the rest of the world with COVID-19. I'm happy to say that we already had a pandemic plan we were able to refer to and will improve on as we learn from this trying time. We have been able to continue services thanks to technology and our innovative team and I expect we will be able to take all these learnings into the future in many areas.

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



Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey Board Chair Tracy Primeau ("Hillary Clinton") with Michelle Lamont, Community & Fund Development Coordinator at the Annual Fall Fundraising Gala (Halloween/Masquerade Ball Theme) in October 2019

Amanda Friesen, Board Treasurer

Annual Report 2019-2020

I would like to start this report by saying what an honour it was to be asked to come back to the Board as Treasurer. I appreciate the opportunity to volunteer for such an amazing organization. I would also like to take time to thank the Executive Director and Accounting Clerk for doing such an amazing job working with our budget in the unprecedented times we are in right now.

The Finance Committee meets quarterly to review Women's House revenues and expenditures and to ensure that the Board is properly informed about the finances of the organization. We also review and update financial policies and procedures, liaise with our external auditor, as well as provide oversight and advice to the Executive Director and Accounting Clerk.

Upon my return I found out that last year was the very first “reset” year, giving us an opportunity to budget based on what we know we had fundraised in the year before, which makes planning much easier. This year is also our first year for a new model of fundraising which has seen a substantial growth in our fundraised dollars. It will be a few years before we see if this is a sustainable way. As always, fundraising is still high priority to make sure we meet the operating expenses every year, and unless the government makes sure we are fully funded, it will not change. Women's House operations now exceed 1.5M annually, and some of this budget and the programs we run depend on fundraised dollars. Losing the sponsors would result in women and children losing services where our Ministry funding falls short.

We were lucky enough to be the recipient this year of \$59,000 in enhanced funding from the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services, which meant we did not have to rely as heavily on fundraised dollars. As always, we are so thankful to the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services and Ministry of the Attorney General for the core funding they provide, and to the community for their donations and support every year.



Women's House
Serving Bruce and Grey

Meag Durkin, Board Vice Chair

Annual Report 2019-2020

This year marked the beginning of a five-year strategic plan undertaken by staff, management and the Board of Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey. The strategic plan, developed in facilitated sessions with the Board and staff members in September of 2018, was finalized and approved last year and identified four key strategic priorities for the organization to tackle over the coming years. These strategic directives and their associated operation plans and key performance indicators have provided a roadmap for much of the work that the Board, and specifically the Communications Committee, has focused on over the past 12 months.

We have worked alongside the Executive Director to develop a comprehensive communications strategy for diversifying the funding base of Women's House. With an increased demand for services in our area, specifically in the wake of the #MeToo movement, we have taken an active role in implementing measured and deliberate changes to our fundraising and sponsorship models. We are looking to invigorate the organization's existing communications to effectively reach out to existing and new channels for fund development revenues.

The committee is eager to develop a communication rubric and strategy for the three remaining priorities outlined in the organization's strategic plan. Over the past year, the Board was able to recruit new members with backgrounds in marketing, organizational and strategic communication and we believe they will provide unique insight and assistance in future drafts.



The Wrapped in Courage campaign was once again a very successful fundraiser and community awareness project this past November. With a large community interest, we were able to sell out of all new and many existing scarves.

Lisa Owen, Executive Director

Annual Report 2019-2020

Board

Women's House operated successfully this past year with a highly engaged and committed Board of Directors. Three new Board members were provided orientation at the beginning of the fiscal year, and recruitment efforts continued throughout the year in anticipation of the need for more new Board Members for the next fiscal year. In addition, a Communications Committee comprised of Board Members and the Executive Director was struck. The Committee completed work on a new Communication Strategy that addresses the need for stability in funding and fundraising prior to the end of the fiscal year.

Administrative

Reporting requirements of the Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, Ministry of Attorney General, Bruce County Housing, and Statistics Canada were met throughout the year. Women's House also performed all tasks required for implementation of a new Serious Occurrence Reporting system through MCCSS, and participated in Transfer Payment Ontario training, which is the new system to be used by MCCSS for budgeting and reporting purposes. Towards the end of the fiscal year, communications/updates took place with both funding Ministries regarding pandemic planning and the status of Women's House operations during that difficult time. Throughout the year, Women's House remained connected and engaged with the provincial Let's Talk group, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centers, and Women's Shelters Canada. In addition, due to changes made to Women's House Vision and Mission Statements at last year's Annual General Meeting, edits were made to all pertinent documents within Women's House. A full annual review of policy and procedure was also completed, and the Board of Directors was kept up to date regarding progress made on the Strategic Plan.

Financial

Signing authorities were changed this year with both Royal Bank and Meridian Credit Union to reflect changes made to the Board's Executive at last year's Annual General Meeting. At the end of the last fiscal year, Women's House was able to reach its goal of having six months operating costs in reserves. Payroll processing systems and tax filing systems were changed at the Royal Bank this year, so Women's House implemented required amendments. The Ministry of Attorney General allocated an \$18,000 increase for this past year, which was used to hire a short-term contract person to work with wait listed women in our Sexual Assault Services. The Ministry of Children Community and Social Services provided Women's House with \$15,000 in funding to replace its phone system which was at end of life, \$8,253 for Child and Youth funding which was used to employ a short-term Child and Youth Worker in the Shelter, and \$8,316 in Capacity Building funding which was to be used for a staff workshop but had to be delayed due to the pandemic. The workshop expenses have been paid for this fiscal year, however the workshop will have to take place in the next fiscal year. Due to lack of affordability and unsustainability, two positions went from full-time to part-time this past year – the Community and Fund Development Coordinator and one of the Child Witness Counsellor positions, and a part-time Outreach Counsellor position was eliminated.

Personnel

The Executive Director retained responsibility for the support and supervision of seven direct reports over the course of this past year – the Shelter Manager, Sexual Assault Services and Outreach Manager, Property Manager, Administrative Assistant, Community and Fund Development Coordinator, Accounting Clerk, and Second Stage Counsellor. Labour Management Meetings took place throughout the year as required, with two Letters of Understanding being developed with Unifor regarding language around hours of work and bumping rights. Bi-monthly Full Staff Team Meetings continued to be held, as were monthly Management Team Meetings – both with a focus on Strategic Planning activities. Exit interviews were put in place with all staff leaving employment at Women’s House in part to inform a newly developed Recruitment Strategy, and the annual review of Job Descriptions was conducted. All staff identified as “messengers” in the new Fundraising Communications Plan were oriented to the plan and messaging within it. Work began on assessing internal communications in anticipation of that becoming the next focus of the Communications Committee. New staff training has been enhanced with some resources available to Women’s House through the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses. When the pandemic began, all Administrative and Outreach staff began working from home and special project work was assigned to them so that they could maintain full-time employment – namely work related to the Strategic Plan and various education campaigns. The Shelter remained operational, although at reduced capacity so that appropriate social distancing could be maintained and with increased screening protocols and enhanced sanitization.



Women’s House Serving Bruce & Grey Executive Director Lisa Owen accepts a donation from Keith & Linda Battler, who committed to donating \$250 for every house listed for sale through them in 2019 and again in 2020

Program

Staff within our programs had some difficult struggles to contend with over this past year. A couple of women who were well known to many staff members died tragically – one by suicide and another in a car accident. In addition, for the first time ever, a Shelter staff member was assaulted by a woman we had previously served. On top of all of this, Women’s House had to enact their Pandemic Plan towards the end of the fiscal year, requiring all staff to dramatically change how they operate. Despite all of this, a number of programming tasks were completed: a Holistic Framework was developed for all programs; the level and type of diversity in Bruce and Grey Counties was researched to inform the development of an Intersectional Framework; Case Coordination Procedures were reviewed; Women’s House was recognized by the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline as a resource for trafficked women; Pet Policy and Procedure was approved and implemented within the Shelter program allowing women to admit with their pets, thus eliminating a barrier for women needing to access service; work began on collecting sexual violence, child witness, and domestic violence presentation materials and identifying gaps; the system for internal program evaluation was reviewed; and Women’s House began to track statistics on the number of human trafficking survivors they are providing service to.

Community Development

Women’s House participated in the Wrapped in Courage Campaign this past year, and sold all products making for a successful fundraiser and community awareness project. The Executive Director attended a Dentistry’s Role in Abuse Recognition, Documentation, and Domestic Violence Prevention Workshop, which provided a great opportunity to be involved with a group other than Women’s House that was pushing for the need for collaboration across all sectors in the community to address violence against women. In addition, there was a strong public presence during the pandemic at the end of the fiscal year, with radio interviews and print media releases taking place.

Health and Safety

The annual Health and Safety Policy and Procedure Review took place this past fiscal year, and the Review of Task Inventories, which takes place every three years, was completed as part of hazard risk assessment. Towards the end of the fiscal year, additional communications and protocols were put in place in response to the pandemic. Administrative and Outreach staff began working from home providing services primarily by phone, while the Shelter remained operational, albeit at reduced capacity in order to allow for appropriate social distancing, and with enhanced screening and sanitization protocols in place. Women’s House remained connected to the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses during this time, which was very helpful with regards to the development of best practices and appropriate response.

Lana Sanderson-Neeb, Shelter Manager

Annual Report 2019-2020

Program delivery continues to be the most important function of the shelter, and staff continue to focus on providing the highest level of services possible to those in need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Services include: In-House Shelter services, where women have access to emergency shelter and counselling services; Transitional Support, where women are assisted in planning for an abuse-free life in the community; and Crisis Line support, where women can anonymously access professional, confidential support for both sexual assault and violence against women issues. Our numbers this year indicate an ongoing need for the shelter within the community. Unfortunately, we needed to refer 44 women to other shelters this year due to capacity issues, while 22 requests were not within the resources of Women's House and were referred to other, more appropriate agencies.

Staff help women to address trauma, life circumstances, available coping mechanisms, financial strains, legal/court process, and lack of affordable housing. Demographics reveal that: 6% of the women were between the ages of 16-18; 17% between the age of 19-25; 47% between the age of 26-35; 15% between the age of 36-45; 15% between the age of 46-55; 7% between the age of 55-65; 0% were 66-75 and 0% were 75+. Reasons for admission were; experienced physical abuse (67%); emotional abuse (36%); and a lack of safe housing (9%). Out of these women, 78% had also disclosed sexual abuse throughout their lives. Without the shelter service in Bruce County, women would have to relocate outside of their area, separating them from family, friends and community support, further isolating them and hindering their ability to access services already put into place.

Staff engagement remained a priority as a means to further staff development. The Shelter team had opportunities to participate in full staff meetings, Shelter team meetings, and Strategic Planning. Staff training was again a consistent theme for the year. Staff had opportunities to participate in Motivational Interviewing, Harm Reduction in Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters, Human Trafficking, Addiction and Mental illness, as well as the free online training courses offered through Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Housing. Training remains an integral part of staff development and ensuring that staff has all the necessary skills and knowledge to provide support to women.

I am honored to be working with a great group of women whose dedication and support towards the women and children we serve is consistent in the day to day operations of the shelter. Below are some comments from women who have used the shelter service:

"My experience with Women's House has been invaluable. Without the service provided to me, I wouldn't be where I am today, and I thank you all for that."

"Thank you so much for all the support and in making me feel comfortable and not scared while here."

"Thank you for such excellent support and service."

"People are people no matter the circumstances. Everybody has a place here."

Consistent Health and Safety routines and efforts continue to pay off in ensuring a safe and well-maintained workplace for both staff and clients. Routine government inspections throughout the year confirmed that the shelter remains in compliance with government regulations. Shelter team members renewed their first aid certification this past year and fire drills were completed on a monthly basis.

Shelter operations were altered due to COVID-19: the crisis lines and shelter remained operational, with the shelter limited to operating at fifty percent capacity; guests were not provided access to the Shelter; increased sanitation and infection control measures were put in place; and social distancing practices were implemented for staff and residents.

Public relations and networking continues to be a critical part in engaging the community and other Women's House partners. These efforts are used to ensure that Women's House is seen as an active and positive influence within the region.

The Shelter leadership continues to participate in professional and community forums as a means of networking and developing cooperative relationships with like-minded stakeholders. Women's House continues to work with other shelters within the Southwestern Ontario Shelter Association, where managers network and discuss issues of mutual concern. The Shelter staff was also integrally involved with local organizations to establish processes and create efficiencies between organizations. These organizations included, but were not limited to: Bruce County Housing; Bruce County Social Services; South Bruce OPP; Grey County Housing; and Child and Family Services.

The Annual Christmas Program continued through the dedication of the staff and local donations. Twenty-three women and twenty-three children received packages/hampers as well as outreach women received gift cards. The response as usual was overwhelming.



Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) provided a \$20,700 grant to Women's House to equip the shelter with bed bug resistant furniture.

Bernice Connell, Sexual Assault Services and Outreach Manager

Annual Report 2019-2020

This fiscal year has ended like no other previously as Women's House, along with the rest of the world, is in the midst of coping with the COVID 19 virus pandemic. We have established new routines and norms to enable continued support for women and children accessing our services. The outreach staff have largely worked from home in recent weeks as all in-person sessions with women are suspended for the time being. Telephone support has its own challenges and benefits and as time goes by, women are counting on that support in increasing numbers. Counselors are creative in the work; arranging virtual meetings with other service providers and continuing to advocate for women and children when needed. This is especially challenging when working with children whose routines are changed and their understanding of what is happening varies. The current wait list for services is longer than usual. Several children's groups were held this past year as well as two groups for women. Our team is staying connected through regular check-ins and weekly conference calls to share challenges and successes. Throughout the year, outreach staff have held regular team meetings, ongoing supervision and support sessions and attended full staff meetings. As manager, I participate in management team meetings, supervision and support and, in conjunction with the Executive Director and Shelter manager, provide 24/7 on-call support to the shelter.

Community collaboration and public education continue to be important components of our work and included the following over the past year:

- WH continued to work closely with Violence Prevention Grey Bruce by participating on the Steering Committee and the Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence Committee. The many initiatives of VPGB included protocol review and developing a local response to human trafficking.
- We maintain membership in the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres which provides leadership, resources and collaborative action on sexual violence issues.
- WH is a member of the west region OPP sexual assault case review committee.
- Facilitation of the OnSide educational program took place for two Ontario Hockey League teams.
- In recent years, WH staff have co-facilitated the PAR group for women who have been charged with domestic violence. During this time, women are being referred to WH for individual counseling in order to finish their requirements for this group.
- WH staff participated in planning public events this year; December 6th, 16 Days of Activism articles, print and radio anti-violence ads and health fairs.
- WH continues collaborative work with Bruce Grey Child & Family Services as we support women and children involved with this service.

Currently, work days are carried out through a pandemic filter as we adjust and fine tune our responses. We can be proud of everyone at Women's House, rising to provide whatever is required to support women and children. It is an inspiration to work with such dedicated women making a difference in the lives of women and children accessing our services. The coming year presents challenges for Women's House as we continue to work toward ending violence and seeking justice for women and children. The struggles experienced as this year ends will hopefully strengthen us moving forward. I wish for safety for all at Women's House; Board, staff and volunteers and their families as we move toward better times.

Alana Eadie, Administrative Assistant

Annual Report 2019-2020

Human Resources

Recruitment efforts for Relief Counsellors in the Shelter were made on several occasions throughout the year, resulting in the hiring of seven new Relief staff. It remains an ongoing struggle to recruit, train and retain Relief staff in the shelter. Other personnel activities included filling five positions on a permanent basis, filling twelve positions on a temporary basis to cover leaves, as well as facilitating three returns from leave.

One-time funding was received through the Ministry of the Attorney General to help address Sexual Assault program waitlists. With this funding we were able to create a temporary full-time Sexual Assault Counsellor position. This position was filled with an internal candidate for 16 weeks, ending in December 2019. With one-time funding from the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services secured in early 2020, we were able to create a temporary full-time Child & Youth Worker position in the shelter. This position was filled with an internal candidate for 8 weeks during February & March 2020.

Eight resignations were received this past year. Six resignations were from relief staff who had secured full-time employment elsewhere, one resignation was from a part-time permanent staff and one resignation was from a full-time permanent staff. Personnel files for both staff and board members were audited and brought up-to-date where necessary, and the Organizational Chart and Staff Directory were updated on a monthly basis. An application was submitted to secure summer student employment at Women's House, however we were not awarded funding this year through the Canada Summer Jobs program. Another application was made to request one position in the next fiscal year – a Transition Support Worker. Compliance with training requirements under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act was ensured throughout the year, as was compliance with Workplace Violence legislation. Women's House new staff orientation was updated this year to include additional detailed Health & Safety training components.

The Administrative Assistant completed a review of the employee insurance and benefits package, and liaised with an outside benefits provider to compare packages. After conducting a thorough review and comparison, it was decided that Women's House would stay with our current insurance and benefits package provider.

Administrative

The Administrative Assistant maintained active involvement with the Board of Directors throughout the year, compiling monthly Board Packages with staff reports and distributing these prior to each board meeting. The Annual Report covering the 2018/19 fiscal year was compiled and distributed at the Annual General Meeting in June, as well as being posted on the Women's House website.

The Administrative Assistant continued working alongside the Accounting Clerk this year to ensure a full understanding of the payroll process. The Administrative Assistant also continued ongoing orientation of additional tasks that the Accounting Clerk is responsible for, such as accounts payable/receivable. This ongoing process will ensure that there is additional staff with knowledge of the Accounting Clerk's job duties in the possible event of her absence.

The Administrative Assistant provided ongoing support to the Community Development & Fundraising Coordinator in preparation for fundraising events, advertising events on our website and social media accounts, and other administrative tasks. The Administrative Assistant is responsible for updating the organization's website and social media outlets. We reached new milestones this year with regards to our social media presence. Women's House now has over 775 likes on our Facebook page and we continue to reach more people as awareness of our page increases. Our Facebook page has proven to be a great tool for advertising upcoming fundraising events, as well as providing education to the public on violence against women. Women's House has recently joined Instagram, and is slowly building a following on this platform as well as Twitter.

Agency-Wide

Over the course of this past year, the Administrative Assistant maintained active involvement with the full staff team by attending and participating in staff meetings and training opportunities. The Administrative Assistant was also responsible for compiling information from staff each month for the internal newsletter, which was then distributed amongst staff and allowed for everyone to contribute information and events to keep each other informed. The Administrative Assistant helped to coordinate a capacity building session with staff and board that was to occur at the end of March 2020, however this was postponed indefinitely due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



Wearing red high heeled shoes and carrying signs, men 'walked a mile' through downtown Port Elgin in May 2019 to raise awareness about gender based violence and sexual assault at the annual Women's House Serving Bruce and Grey Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® event

Candace Burton, Volunteer and Community Development Coordinator

Annual Report 2019-2020

Volunteer Program

Women's House has been very fortunate to have an amazing team of talented and dedicated volunteers who give their precious time to assist the many women and children we serve every year. **This past year we had 46 active volunteers who contributed 1,080 hours of volunteer service to our organization.**



This past fall we had an intimate and enjoyable gathering of volunteers at our **Volunteer Appreciation Celebration** held at the Bruce County Museum on September 28th. **Volunteers in attendance:** *Dominique Jackson, Mary Williams (guest), Candace Burton (Volunteer Coordinator), Peggy Bourassa & Ed William*

The Ontario Volunteer Service Awards took place on September 17th in Owen Sound. Women's House nominated the following volunteers: **Mandy Friesen for 5 years (pictured below), Dianne Thompson for 5 years and Judy Gates for 10 years.**

I have facilitated three full-day volunteer trainings this past year as well as few half-day orientations for those volunteers working out in the community in areas such as fundraising or special events.



Community Development Activities

During Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month in May we ran print ads in the Coffee News and radio ads throughout the month, including the promotion of various #MeToo events. I created a display in our outreach office window leading up to prom season which involved mannequins dressed in formal wear and including a LGBTQ+ context and messages about sexual assault awareness and prevention.

I had the opportunity to take part in two television interviews with Rogers Cable with a focus on Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Social media continues to be an effective tool for increasing awareness and sharing information and resources. Violence Prevention Grey Bruce created an outstanding and informative Social Media Campaign for May.

I continue to promote Draw-the-line.ca at all our public events. Draw the Line is an interactive online campaign that engages Ontarians in a dialogue about sexual violence.

I attended the Annual Health & Wellness Fair in Owen Sound as well as Volunteer Fairs in Meaford and Port Elgin. On October 15th I participated in the Sisters in Spirit Vigil & Full Moon Ceremony hosted by the M'Wikwedong Centre. The December 6th Vigil was held in Owen Sound in partnership with Georgian College and other community partners. We had roughly 100 individuals in attendance for the 30-year anniversary of this vigil.

Krista Wilken, Second Stage Counsellor

Annual Report 2019-2020

The Second Stage Housing program operates from a feminist based, trauma-informed perspective. We recognize that women are the experts in their own lives and work to facilitate empowerment. Participation in our housing program provides time and assistance for survivors to establish safety and stability. Second Stage offers safe and affordable transitional housing to both single women and women with children who are experiencing abuse and/or homelessness. Support is also provided to a number of women in the community seeking transition and housing support.

We continue to work with program participants around their individual goals and transition plans. Advocacy and referrals are provided for women accessing various community resources. Given the nature of our services, crisis intervention, counselling support, education and safety planning are key elements of support we provide. One of the main program goals are to connect women with stable, long term, affordable housing at the completion of the second stage program. We have continued to maintain good working relationships with community partners and as a result, benefit from coordinated efforts and system collaboration.

This past year, two support groups were offered through Second Stage. 14 women participated in these groups and both groups were 8 weeks in length. The focus of group has been strengthening coping strategies and building connection. It is ideal for women to know they are not alone. Group offers women a safe space to share information as well as their stories, struggles, etc. Group has also been a great forum to raise awareness about women's issues. Various topics are discussed and spotlight empowerment and personal growth. Our on-site office space is ideal for helping build a sense of community amongst the women participating in Second Stage. The space offers a place for counselling, as well as more informal interactions with women. It's been helpful for hosting groups and related activities that support the development of life-skills.

The Second Stage program continues to use volunteers for both peer support and transportation. We encourage feedback from program participants through program evaluations which are distributed quarterly. We have also had positive feedback from testimonials. Program challenges continue to be around lack of transportation across Bruce and Grey, lack of affordable housing as well as unit turnover costs.

Michelle Lamont, Community & Fund Development Coordinator

Annual Report 2019-2020

With the 2019-20 fundraising target of \$193,592, focus on the success of fundraisers, grants and the support of sponsors was at an all-time high, and was most essential to being able to continue to deliver our current programs and services that are so vital to our community.

Community Development

We are very lucky to be in this community where groups and organization make it their priority to help the women and children who knock on our door each day, and we work to ensure we continue great partnerships with them. We have played an active role in Community Development within Bruce & Grey counties, with presentations made to many service clubs, churches and special interest groups in hopes of educating the public on domestic violence and Women’s House programs and services, helping to foster several positive community relationships and generous donations as a result. The awareness that these types of connections make will generate conversations, build knowledge and awareness, and help towards our goal of elimination of violence against women.

Fund Development

The first part of the fiscal year started with Spring Admail, where we sent our Spring Newsletter (with an article on Human Trafficking) to 860 people on the Women’s House mailing list, as well as electronically to all current sponsors, staff, volunteers and Board members. *Walk a Mile in Her Shoes*® was held on May 26th, 2019, and with 47 men participating in the walk, the event was very successful. Throughout the year, numerous grant applications were completed and submitted, resulting in additional funds for Women’s House.

The third quarter is a busy time for events, planning and grants. In addition, requests were sent out to 233 potential and current sponsors, and 205 local municipalities, churches and service groups, requesting financial support for the next fiscal year and offering to do presentations about Women’s House. The last Gala for Women’s House was held on October 19th, 2019 with a Halloween Masquerade Ball theme. Ruth Montgomery volunteered to provide and help with the décor, which resulted in a huge time and money savings. The night was full of fun activities, including a live and silent auction, dinner, trivia game, music, and dancing. The evening also supported our need for fundraised revenue.



November was Woman Abuse Awareness month, and with that came our Wrapped in Courage campaign. With the help of several volunteers looking after tables at numerous storefront locations, and with the purchase of 200 newly designed purple scarves this year, we sold out of all inventory from this year, as well as most of the inventory in stock from previous years. The winter admail campaign saw a newsletter with an article on Domestic Violence Perpetrated by Men versus Women: Understanding the Differences. The newsletter also shared a list of ways that donations can help Women's House and the women and children accessing services.

We held our annual International Women's Day Celebration on March 3rd, 2020, partnering for the second time with the County of Bruce's Business to Bruce division to hold the event. The evening was a success, not only in terms of surpassing fundraising objectives, but also in terms of objectives related to public awareness. The Silent and Live Auction and Trivia Game attributed to the night's fundraising proceeds, and that, along with the wonderful opportunity to celebrate and bring awareness to the public on International Women's Day and women's issues, made the evening so much more than just entertaining. The keynote speaker Jamie McMillan brought some of those issues to the forefront in her heartfelt and inspiring talk about women in non-traditional workplace roles. The recipients of our Woman and Young Woman of Distinction Awards drove the message home, setting the bar high and showing us the positive difference that women make in this world.



A much needed overhaul and focused organization of the Administration basement took place this past year, including setting up new shelving which was generously donated by Canadian Tire. This project, with the help of many volunteers and staff, resulted in a more organized and concentrated set up of items kept in stock for the women we support, and a storage area to hold fundraising event supplies. The fourth quarter involved applications for two Grants. Normally there are other grants available during the Q4 time period, but the restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in many delays and changes in deadlines for granting and approvals, therefore opportunities for those grants will be delayed.

Following the success of our first official year with our Sponsorship Program, we continued the program for the 2019-20 fiscal year, with 39 Women's House Serving Bruce and Grey Sponsors in total by the end of the year. With sponsorship donations ranging from \$1,000 to \$22,000, and totaling a significant part of our fundraising budget, representing cash, in-kind and capital support. In addition to the sponsorship support and the many successful events, grant proposals and letters of request for support written throughout the fiscal year, numerous host events held by community partners and generous donations made by individuals demonstrate the ongoing support that our community shows for the vital work that we do in helping women and their children who have experienced violence to have happier, healthier lives.

Mary Smith, Property Manager

Annual Report 2019-2020

Shelter

An Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant and Trillium Mutual Insurance grant allowed us to purchase bedbug resistant furniture for the Shelter's bedrooms. An MCCSS infrastructure grant allowed us to install coded locks on all the Shelter's bedroom doors and the door going into the inner shelter portion of the building. In addition, an MCCSS infrastructure grant allowed us to upgrade the Kincardine Main Building phone system. We replaced the two water heaters that we rented from Reliance, as it was determined that it would be more cost effective to own our own water heaters. Pollock Electric was the best quote and installed the two 60-gallon water heaters in September. For the first time, RBC employees volunteered their time to kick off our gardens. A big thank you to Betty Lamont who is our volunteer master gardener, in supervising and instructing them on what was required. Betty arranged last year to have them come again in 2020.



Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) provided a \$20,700 grant to Women's House to equip the shelter with bed bug resistant furniture.
(Pictured left to right: Michelle Lamont, Community & Fund Development Coordinator; Lisa Thompson, Huron-Bruce MPP; Lisa Owen, Executive Director; Loretta Dunn, OTF; Mary Smith, Property Manager)

Second Stage

By March 31, 2020, we had 26 women and 18 children that lived at the three Second Stage Housing Units. Seventeen (17) women during this time stayed in second stage for a combined total of 126 months. This is an average of 7.9 months of stay per woman. We had to replace Unit 2 and Unit 3 boilers. We replaced both boilers under warranty but only the labour for unit 2 was also under warranty. We replaced the keyed locks with coded locks on individual units in Port Elgin and Wiaraton.

Owen Sound

An MCCSS infrastructure grant allowed us to install two automatic door openers for the two entrance doors from the parking lot. An MCCSS infrastructure grant also allowed us to upgrade the Owen Sound Building phone system.

Administration

We were able to receive another grant from Trillium Mutual Insurance to buy three laptops, and I was able to prepare them for staff (installing Microsoft Outlook, Kaspersky, etc.). We were also able to buy three desktop computers and seven more laptops which we are in the process of preparing for staff. We will be looking into having a laptop loan for our Second Stage women and possibly to our outreach women. We once again received a Home Depot Grant for painting, cleaning floors and cleaning Second Stage Units. We were given \$3,000 to go towards painting and cleaning, and \$2,000 in Home Depot gift cards.

Health and Safety

The Property Manager has been conducting the Health and Safety duties including but not limited to: co-chairing the Joint Health and Safety Committee; overseeing monthly inspections; WHMIS Testing; First Aid Inspections; workplace illnesses and injuries; etc.

There was major incident/injury related work report but no hazards reports. Recommendations are being collected and the Health and Safety Committee will make their recommendations to prevent this incident/injury in the future in the new fiscal year.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization announced a global pandemic due to COVID – 19. As the Health and Safety representative for management, I started to email and post recommended procedures from our Public Health Organizations to staff and second stage tenants.