

Women's Crisis Services
OF WATERLOO REGION



A YEAR OF CHANGE AND GROWTH

ANNUAL REPORT: 2022 - 2023



SHE IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR survivor series

A message from our CEO and Board Chair

Another incredible and busy year is behind us. The past year has been a time of change as well as a time of growth for our organization. Within the violence against women sector, organizations have raised concerns – not only has the need for services increased, the overall level of violence has also risen. Fortunately, awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence has grown, including an acknowledgment that more needs to be done to address this situation. Several municipalities including the City of Ottawa have declared domestic violence an epidemic. We are hopeful that these declarations will help to create a sense of urgency in the roll out of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

Over the last year in Ontario alone, there were 52 femicides in 52 weeks. Shocking, unbelievable, and unacceptable. In season four of the She Is Your Neighbour podcast, we shared six stories to help our community understand what femicide actually means. Through this series, we tackled a heavy topic while sharing stories of strength and resilience. We were grateful to expand our awareness efforts by receiving national coverage for this season, including appearing on CTV Your Morning and CBC Saskatchewan. Our project was also entered into Women’s Shelter’s Canada Best Practices Library.

In addition to escalating violence, we have also seen an increase in the complexity of client needs. Mental health struggles, the opioid crisis, as well as the lack of affordable housing has greatly impacted the women and children we serve, demanding an immediate and thoughtful response. Our staff provided support with care and compassion, and once again, our generous community stepped up by showing their support in a variety of ways. Thanks to our supportive donors, community and increased government funding, we were able to expand and grow our programs and services by adding new staff positions to help meet the needs of our clients.

A highlight of the past year was launching our new transitional housing program with the opening of Aspen Place. This triplex provides housing for women and children who are transitioning out of our emergency shelters and into independence. We purchased the triplex in May; following renovations with an ‘all hands-on deck’ approach, we were able to welcome families at the end of August, just in time for the start of the school year. Over the year, Aspen Place has been home to 7 moms and 16 children who are moving forward to brighter futures.

We are looking forward to the year ahead and anticipate more changes to come. We continue to rely on our community as we can’t do this alone, and everyone has a role to play in ending domestic violence.



Jennifer Hutton
CEO



Terry Wilson
Board Chair

Our Mission

In partnership with our community, Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region empowers and supports women and children to move beyond violence and abuse through the provision of safe shelter, education and outreach services.

Our Vision

A community free from violence and abuse in any of its forms.

Our Values

Respect, Choice & Diversity – Treating people with respect, honouring choice and valuing diversity is at the core of who we are.

Partnership and Empowerment – Make us stronger and contribute to our efforts to promote the empowerment of women and children experiencing domestic abuse and violence.

Excellence and Leadership – Our community deserves the best and we strive to be the best in everything we do.

Integrity and Accountability – Doing the right thing promotes honesty and integrity and fosters accountability.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Terry Wilson, Chair
Jane Adams, Vice-Chair
Angela Wilson, Treasurer
Stuart McAlister, Secretary
Vickie Murray, Director
Anamaria Pasc, Director
Debra Williams, Director
Rosina Amoah Agyapong, Director
Brenda Halloran, Director
Sharan Widsten, Director
Najma Jose, Director

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Jennifer Hutton, CEO
Carolyn Albrecht, Senior Director of Operations
Natascha Hergott, Residential Manager, Anselma House
Leigh Savage, Residential Manager, Haven House
Jenna Mayne, Communications and Fund Development Manager
Trish Sabourin, Outreach Manager
Joyce Birnstihl, Human Resources Manager, Operations
Pam Hillis, Human Resources Manager, Strategy and Culture



Providing Shelter and Support

We provided crisis support to **2,412** people through our support lines and online chat

268 Chats & 2144 Phone Calls

We provided safe shelter to **383** people through our emergency shelters



ANSELMA HOUSE

WOMEN 107
CHILDREN 71



HAVEN HOUSE

WOMEN 115
CHILDREN 90

We provided outreach services to **1,112** people

Residential Programming and Partnerships

This past year in the residential program there has been growth and change. There have been new partnerships developed as well as new positions added to ensure the best service for our clients. Each team now has a consistent night shift worker which gives primary workers more time to support their clients. The Child and Youth Program has also enhanced programming with one of our workers obtaining certification to facilitate a family literacy program called Get Set Learn. We have also been fortunate to further develop our partnership with House of Friendship. There are currently two Family Outreach Workers that attend both shelters biweekly. They have been able to support our residents by accompanying them to appointments and providing essential items.

We continued to focus on harm reduction in shelter this year and provide addictions support to our clients. Our goal is to better meet our clients' needs and to acknowledge the intersection between domestic violence, addictions and mental health. The staff person in the addictions assignment meets one-on-one with residents to discuss their substance use and/or mental health concerns and creates a plan for how to best support them during their stay in shelter. This could include safety planning related to safe drug use, self-care during a mental health crisis, connecting them to counselling or referring them to addiction and mental health services in the community. We have also partnered with the Working Centre to provide their clients with education on domestic violence and to provide assistance making referrals.

Early Intervention

We connected with **266** people through the Early Intervention Program

Through our Outreach Program, we continue our work with the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS). In June 2022, we launched a one-year pilot program focused on early intervention. Through this program, an Outreach worker spends dedicated time with WRPS officers to connect with couples experiencing domestic violence to provide resources and referrals.

When the program started, we began reaching out to couples who had three domestic violence calls within three months. Over the course of the year, we adjusted our approach and began connecting with couples who had two domestic violence calls within two months. This had a great impact and the number of the interventions doubled! This means more people were provided with support, sooner.

We have also seen a reduction in subsequent domestic violence calls from these couples. Before we partnered in this way, the recidivism was much higher. The Early Intervention Program is set to continue throughout 2023 with the hopes of expanding it in the years to come.

Public Education

Hope 4 the Future supported over **400** youth in the first 6 months of 2022 – more than the entire previous year

We ran **50** public education presentations

Our Youth Education Program, Hope 4 the Future, is a preventative program focused on educating youth about healthy relationships. The demand for this program has grown within our community so much that we have hired an additional staff member to help meet the increased demand. We continue to build new partnerships with community centres and other organizations to facilitate youth education programming for their communities, including within the rural areas of Waterloo Region. Year over year, attendance at these programs continues to increase significantly, and our surveys indicate that youth who attend the program gain confidence in interpersonal relationships and self-esteem, among other skills.



In addition to educating youth, we also connect with the broader community in various ways to increase understanding of domestic violence and raise awareness about the support services that we offer. We deliver presentations to community groups, corporations, universities, health professionals, technology companies, and more.

SHE IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR

This year we continued to make strides with our podcast and public education series, She Is Your Neighbour. The podcast reached new milestones, surpassing **10,000 downloads** and receiving national media attention. We also made changes to the podcast schedule this year and started releasing curated mini-series more frequently. This new approach allowed us to dive deeper into topics that matter. It also enabled us to release two new seasons throughout the year.

Season 3 was focused on telling the unique stories of six survivors of domestic violence and how they went from surviving to thriving. In Season 4, we focused on Understanding Femicide. We heard from survivors, experts, and family members of women and girls who lost their lives to femicide to understand what happens when domestic violence and stalking become lethal.

This year, She Is Your Neighbour was featured on:

- CTV Your Morning
- CTV Saskatchewan
- CBC Kitchener
- CTV Kitchener
- The Record
- and more!



5635

Trackable downloads this year

11,600

All time She is Your Neighbour downloads

500

Over 500 new Instagram followers in 6 weeks

24hrs

All Understanding Femicide episodes had more downloads in 24 hours than any previous series

Opening Aspen Place



Transitional Housing

We provided transitional housing to 7 families.

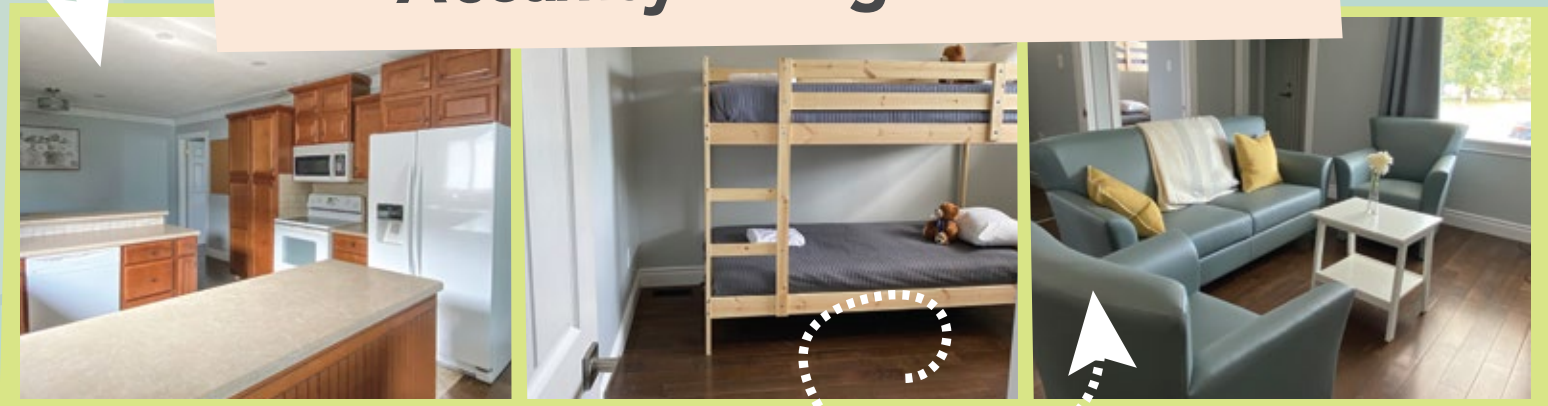
16 children & 7 moms

Thanks to the generosity of the community, this year we were able to open Aspen Place and launch our transitional housing program! Aspen Place provides housing for women and children who are moving out of emergency shelter and into more independent living while also maintaining some on-site support.

Women with multiple children have the most difficulty finding affordable housing and transitioning out of shelter. When women and children stay in emergency shelters for extended lengths of time, shelter beds are not available for those who desperately need it. Women experiencing domestic violence in Waterloo Region deserve to transition to a place that provides more stability and independence.

That is why we opened Aspen Place!

A Journey Through a Unit



Aspen Place is located in Kitchener and features three large family units with a total of **seven bedrooms**. It is located **close to schools**, public transit and other essential amenities, making it a great fit for families.

The name Aspen comes from the Greek word Aspis, meaning "shield", known for its protective qualities.

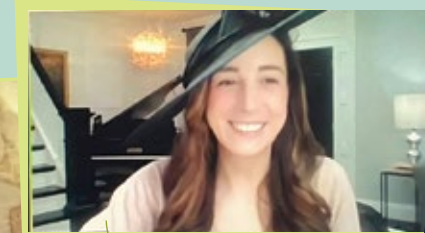
Aspen trees are known for growth and shelter. These trees never grow alone and are always connected to groups.

Scholarship Fund

This year, we expanded the Moving Forward Fund to include a Scholarship Fund in an effort to better support clients in their education journey. Knowing that education is a powerful preventative tool, we officially launched the fund in October 2022 and opened it to our clients. Stories of resilience and determination jumped off the pages of their applications! Since then, we have given out **10 scholarships** to help clients pay tuition fees, purchase books, as well as pay for child care and gas money to get to school. We look forward to growing the Scholarship Fund so that we can continue to support more women in their education journey.



Hats Off to Mom!



This year marked our fifth annual Mother’s Day fundraiser, Hats Off to Mom! Although we were still celebrating Mother’s Day virtually, we were excited to treat moms to a special high tea experience, while helping moms in the community who are experiencing violence. We celebrated Mother’s Day with many community members and with Graemazing, a magician who dazzled us over Zoom by doing close-up magic and teaching us some tricks! We also enjoyed wonderful brunch boxes supplied by Little Mushroom Catering.

Hats Off to Mom! raised over \$32,000 for women and children experiencing violence in the community and it was a great way to spend Mother’s Day honouring moms and all they do for us!

Training and Staff Development

One of our main priorities this year was staff training. A temporary training assignment was developed which focused on improving the staff onboarding process, developing staff training opportunities, and working with a small staff group to develop a life skills group for clients. This assignment led to the development of new community connections as well as new training opportunities for staff to enhance their skills.

People and Culture

For the first time since 2019, we have been able to enjoy coffee time together as an organization! Coffee time gives our staff and clients the chance to sit down and chat while enjoying healthy and delicious treats made by our incredible Food and Nutrition Team. We have also enjoyed connecting in-person at our quarterly all-staff meetings. Every time we meet, we do a fun, team-building activity organized by the Sunshine Committee. This gives staff from different departments a chance to connect and get to know one another.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Over the past year, we continued to work diligently to ensure we are providing excellent service to clients while keeping Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) at the forefront of our work. We worked with two EDI consultants, who developed a report that identified areas of improvement within the organization and staff training was developed as a result. The training has provided staff with a consistent base knowledge of what EDI so we can ensure all clients are being provided with consistent support while also recognizing the systemic barriers that some face. Our EDI working group has also developed a vision statement and work plan that will help to guide the work for the year ahead.

Voices Empower



For the second year in a row, we honoured Women Abuse Prevention Month by organizing Voices Empower: Walk to Break the Silence. This walking fundraiser was focused on raising awareness of domestic violence and femicide. The 6 km walk offered a time to reflect on the women who are killed every six days by an intimate partner, while also raising funds for women and children in our community experiencing violence. Alongside our community, we walked from Uptown Square in Waterloo to Carl Zehr Square in Kitchener, dressed in purple.

This event was a great success **raising over \$75,000!** We couldn’t be more grateful to our community for coming together, raising awareness and walking to break the silence around domestic violence and femicide.

Treasurer's Report

Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region (WCSWR) ended their fiscal year in a strong financial position. The 2022-2023 fiscal year saw the organization grow with Aspen Place serving many families. Our WCSWR team once again rose to the challenges of the year and accomplished them all brilliantly. The team we have running the organization and serving our clients are truly amazing, caring individuals.

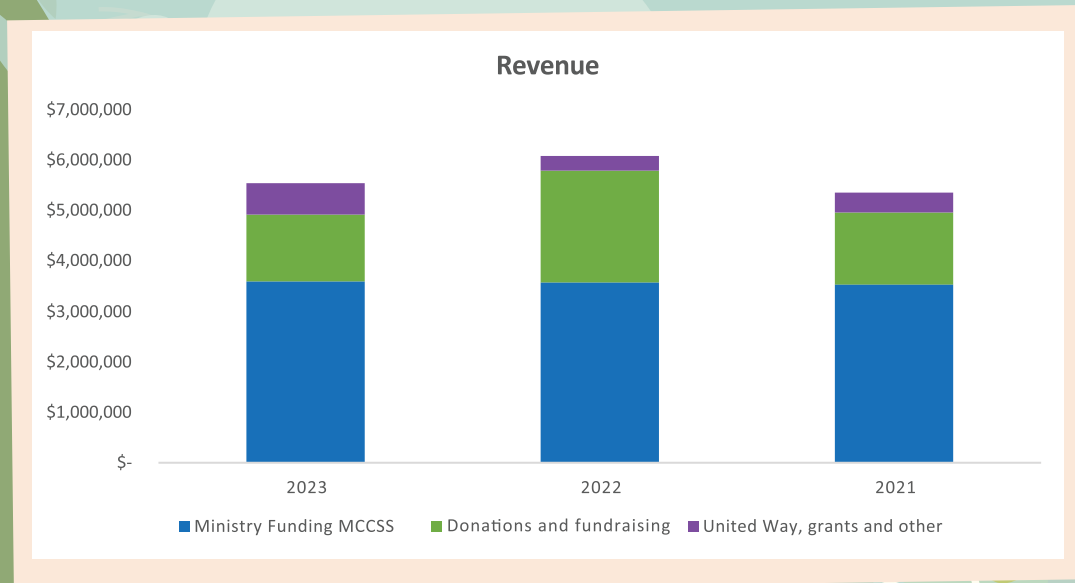
WCSWR's largest funder is the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services as you can see in the chart provided. Funding remained consistent this year with some enhancements of specific program dollars.

Once again, this year, the generosity of the community through donations and participation in our fundraising campaigns was amazing. We remained cautiously optimistic with regards to our fundraising goals this year as we started to exit out of the COVID-19 environment and enter into an environment of some economic uncertainty. The WCSWR team did a fantastic job again this year which led to amazing support from our community allowing the WCSWR team to continue moving forward with several initiatives.

The annual report shares some of the highlights and summary information taken from the audited financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2023. Complete copies of the financial statements are available upon request.

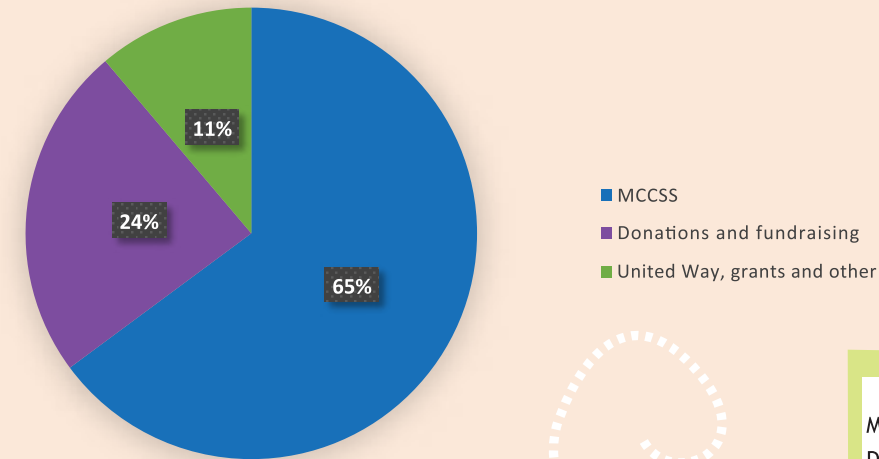


Angela Wilson
Treasurer



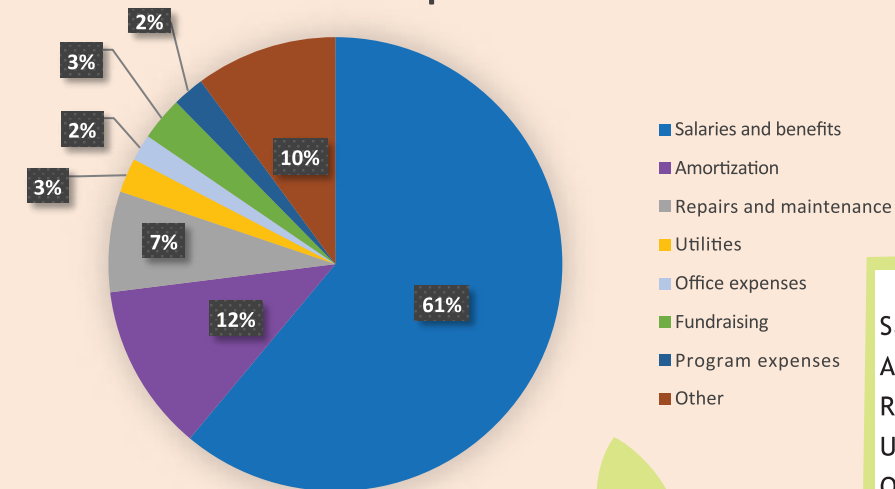
Revenue and Expenses

Revenue



	2022/2023
MCCSS	\$ 3,585,816
Donations and fundraising	1,324,543
United Way, grants and other	618,454
	<u>\$ 5,528,813</u>

Expenses



	2022/2023
Salaries and benefits	\$ 3,673,023
Amortization	718,292
Repairs and maintenance	431,110
Utilities	147,409
Office expenses	113,551
Fundraising	186,995
Program expenses	136,951
Other	606,885
	<u>\$ 6,014,216</u>

Thank you to our Supporters



Women of the Year Awards raised \$1500



Wreck the Dress event raised over \$3000



"Women Talking" viewing raised \$2572



Our supporters and funders are essential to the sustainability of our organization. In collaboration with our funders, donors, and community partners, we empower women and children to move beyond violence. Thank you to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for their essential support and for being our main funding source.

We are also grateful to our local funders. Thank you to United Way Waterloo Region Communities for their financial support of our residential and outreach programs. Thank you to the City of Cambridge for their financial support of our Haven House residential program. We are proud to be a partner member of the Resilience Project, generously funded by the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation.

We are grateful for program funds received from:

- Abundance Canada
- Charities Aid Foundation Canada
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- Gift Funds Canada
- Government of Canada
- Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
- Private Giving Foundation
- Raymond James Canada Foundation
- Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
- Strategic Charitable Giving Foundation
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- Waterloo Region Community Foundation
- Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
- Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Canada

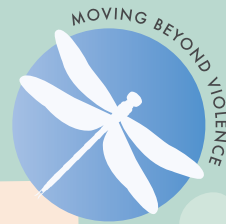


SHE IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR

understanding femicide


Women's Crisis Services

OF WATERLOO REGION



SUPPORT

24/7 Support
via phone and online chat

 519.742.5894
519.653.2422

 www.wcswr.org

LOCATIONS

ANSELMA HOUSE *(head office)*

700 Heritage Drive,
Kitchener, ON N2A 3N9
Office Phone: 519.741.9184

HAVEN HOUSE

10 Acorn Way,
Cambridge, ON N1R 8M5
Office Phone: 519.653.2289

SOCIAL MEDIA

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@ShelsYourNeighbour