



Annual Report
2013-14
fiscal year



The courage of a woman alone is NOT enough, she needs everyone's help

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sadly, the year of 2014 began with a woman from Niagara losing her life because of domestic violence. Judith Fraser, age 73, was stabbed in the parking lot of her home and her ex husband has been charged with her murder. Woman abuse is a deadly business. And we know that this is not an uncommon event in Ontario, in Canada and across the world. The RCMP recently announced 1181 police-recorded homicides and unresolved missing women investigations of Aboriginal women in Canada. In Nigeria 276 young girls were kidnapped from their school to prevent them from getting an education and 100 days later they are still held hostage.

This year at Gillian's Place 161 women and 127 children sought safe shelter under our roof and another 1819 women and children relied on our outreach services to assist and support them to find a new path in a life free from violence and abuse. It is our job at Gillian's Place to help women overcome the many challenges they face and look for every

opportunity to support the extraordinary courage each and every woman exhibits when she reaches out for help. These challenges include, self-esteem that has been beaten down, finding a new home, helping children adjust, and battling the ever present systemic barriers these women will run into along their journey.

This past year alone at Gillian's Place we have been planning for the future to make life better for abused women and their children. Building on our strategic visioning day with the Board and Staff last year, which looked at a 10 year horizon, the Board of Directors undertook a more focused look at the next 3 to 5 years

in a strategic planning process. Consultations with Staff and Stakeholders provided the Board with a picture of the current landscape of service provision. The results show a picture much changed from the last strategic planning consultation in 2010. While the last plan focused on anticipated growth, the environment has since changed and we are now only trying to maintain our current services due to our funding having been frozen since 2009. Staff and Stakeholders were consistent in expressing the increased complexity of women's needs and the pressures the whole social service system is experiencing with 5 years of fiscal restraint. Complexities such as increasing poverty, lack of safe, affordable

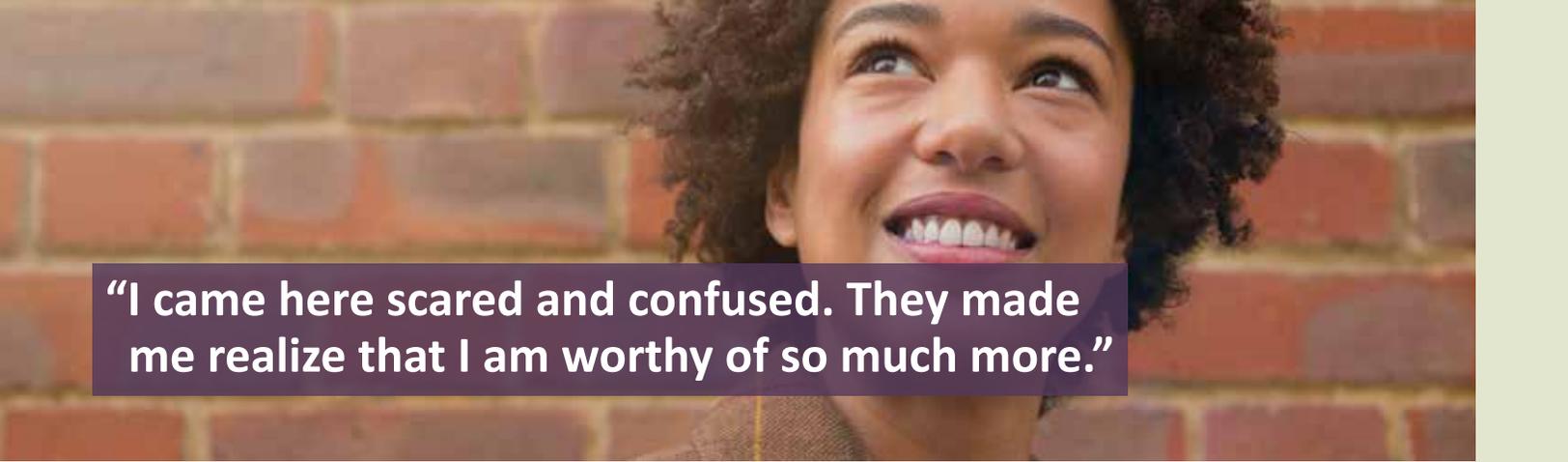
housing, frustrations with the justice system and increased wait times for accessing service topped the list. These complexities add pressure to an already stretched staff and service system as demand for service continues to increase.

Staff and Stakeholder views of Gillian's Place within the service system were also consistent. Attributes such as passionate advocates, leaders, respected,

professional, and collaborative partners topped this list of descriptors. In consolidating this information the joint Board/Staff Strategic Planning Committee identified strategic directions of Leadership through Advocacy, Supporting Staff while meeting Complex Needs and Innovation to Shift the Conversation.

In continuing to meet the increasingly complex needs of abused women and their children within restrained environments partnerships become more and more important. Innovative service partnerships with the March of Dimes to help us meet the needs of older women, an updated Police Protocol, and the many multi-

**On one day in
Canada this past
year, shelters helped
4,178 women and
2,490 children.**



“I came here scared and confused. They made me realize that I am worthy of so much more.”

sector committees in which we participate, and our 5 year partnership with Family and Children’s Services Niagara, are all examples of women experiencing better support when agencies work together.

Over the past 4 years shelters from across the province have begun to work more closely together. From sharing best practices to working together to advocate for better funding, as a movement we are more closely aligned. The Wrapped In Courage Purple Scarf Campaign was launched this year in November to heighten awareness of the issue of violence against women across Ontario. Wearing a purple scarf in November indicated support for ending Violence Against Women (VAW). Many people in Niagara supported the initiative including NRPS Police Chief McGuire, MPP Jim Bradley and all of the Principals in the District School Board of Niagara.

On this same day, 286 women and 205 children could not be accommodated.

Shelters from across the province further demonstrated the benefit of working more closely together as our agency brought together a group of 44 shelters to bring attention to the need for better funding. Working with a specialist, the group prepared reports on the needs of shelters to support abused women. During the month of November many shelters met with their MPPs locally to raise awareness of the pressing issues facing both shelters and abused women and present each MPP with a symbolic purple scarf. The awareness campaign peaked on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women when several Executive Directors went to Queen’s Park to meet with 16 MPPs including meetings with Minister Ted McMeekin, carrying the MCSS portfolio and our funder, and the

Premier’s Office. It was a great pleasure to meet Premier Wynne and present Ms. Wynne with a purple scarf which she wore proudly as the first female Premier in Ontario. These and many more efforts culminated in VAW shelters being successful to receive additional funding in the Liberal Budget in 2014.

In the last 25 years, 541 Women and 58 Children have been murdered in Ontario as a result of Gender Based violence.

From partnerships to allies it is clear that together we are stronger and can have a large impact on ending violence against women. Thank you to all of our allies. We appreciate the support given by our Board of Directors who dedicate their many talents and time, our dedicated and skilled staff, our donors and the Niagara Community. We could not help all of the women and children we do without you. Together we can make a difference and ensure a woman never has to stand alone in her courage to choose a life free from violence and abuse.



Anne Armstrong
Executive Director



Kelly McNaughton
President



2013-14 by numbers

SHELTER SERVICE

2355	Crisis Calls
288	Lived in the shelter: 161 women and 127 children <i>(an average of 84% occupancy over the year)</i>
53	Were re-directed due to no available space: 36 women and 17 children
17,000 +	Women and children have found safe emergency shelter since 1977

OUTREACH SERVICE

294	Women living in the community seeking emergency crisis counselling and support – supported by shelter counsellors
598	Women obtained Family Law advice and advocacy provided by our staff lawyer
291	Women received crisis outreach counselling
205	Women were given practical linkage to support them when navigating the social service system
81	Children who were exposed to woman abuse were seen by a Child & Youth Counsellor through our outreach services
350	Women received help from our Domestic Violence Advocate through the Family & Children's Services Niagara and Gillian's Place Partnership Program: 652 children were impacted
1819	Total served through Outreach Services



Healing from the trauma of abuse

The bottle of oxycodone stood on the bedside table. She eyed it somberly. After years of torment and heartache, the thought came readily: “I can’t do this anymore...there has to be something better.” She couldn’t function. Under the constant barrage of mental abuse she was having terrible anxiety attacks, and depression had set in.

For nearly 40 years, Margaret had barely existed in a relationship dominated by her husband. Every facet of her life – from how she decorated her home, to her personal comfort, to relationships with family and friends – was regulated by her husband, who used religion, money and extreme emotional abuse to control and abuse her.



“They BELIEVED me, and that was the most meaningful thing about my experience at Gillian’s Place”

When women experience trauma at the hands of someone they love and trust, it often impacts them profoundly and in many areas of their lives. It is as traumatic, if not more, than being attacked at the hands of a stranger. Domestic violence involves a pattern of coercive and controlling behavior that a woman’s partner uses against her to obtain power and control over her life, and it is happening daily. By using such tactics as intimidation, coercion and threats, financial abuse and emotional and spiritual abuse, her partner’s actions might make her feel fearful, powerless and hopeless as she struggles to stay as safe as she can in a dangerous

situation. Even after leaving the relationship, her partner might still pose a significant risk to her emotional and physical safety, which often means that healing from abusive experiences takes additional time and effort. The impact of the abusive trauma does not simply go away when a woman leaves the relationship. She can have feelings of terror, intense fear, horror, helplessness and physical stress reactions for years to come. Traumatic experiences are profound and sometimes can change the way in which women see themselves and the world around them.

Living with on-going traumatic events that are life-altering and life threatening require unusual means of coping. Some women become hyper-vigilant, always on the alert and ready for danger. Most survivors of domestic violence have some level of post-traumatic stress, a natural response from living with trauma. Although each person is impacted differently by their experiences with trauma, many survivors of domestic violence talk about the ways in which abuse has affected their physical health, mental health, emotional health, feelings about themselves and others, their relationship with loved ones and other people, their spirituality, and their understanding of the world.

The following story is a poignant example that illustrates the long-standing impact of trauma and terror.

One and a half years after her escape, Margaret still listens for the sound of her husband’s truck passing on the road outside her home. She sits in the kitchen, sipping coffee. She hears the quiet hum of the refrigerator, the gentle breathing of her dog lying at her feet. The kitchen, at the back of the house, has windows that overlook the garden, her refuge for many years. She reads a book, and is relaxed, but then her body tenses. She places her hands on her chest. She is frightened. She

A photograph of an elderly woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a light pink collared shirt. She is looking down at a large, open book she is holding in her hands. The background is a lush green garden with various plants and a wooden fence.

“I feel more confident and know how to cope with the struggles in my life”

heard the sound of a truck passing by. That sound brings her back to the times when she would wait with her children for her husband to drive up. They would listen to how loud he slammed the car door, how fast he walked from the car to the house, how he opened the front door. This would let them know what kind of evening they were going to have – peaceful or terrifying. She did that every afternoon for 40 years. Even though she is now free from him, she still listens to make sure that when she hears the sound of a truck, it continues past her house. Then she knows for now that she is safe. But, every day her heart pounds and her stomach feels like it is in knots.

At 64, Margaret is experiencing a freedom she hasn't known since age 17. On that day when she held the bottle of oxycodone in her hand, the powerful pain reliever she used for neck and back pain – she felt in that moment that she physically, emotionally and mentally couldn't live like that anymore. “I didn't have the strength. I couldn't face another day.” Then she remembered the support line at Gillian's Place.

The change she is experiencing now she says is “surreal”.

“I still have the sensation that I'm going to have to go back someday, that I'm going to fail,” Margaret said “I really haven't been able to totally let go and believe that I am free. I often feel out of control, or that I am 'going crazy'. At times I feel emotionally numb, or suddenly alert and panicky. I don't even realize when I am reacting to things that remind me of the abuse I suffered. I know that healing starts with learning to identify and understand how what has happened is affecting my life today. That way, I can get the help I need to recover.”

Margaret is taking life one day at a time. Healing is occurring, she says, even if slowly. “It's difficult to believe that I have self- worth and value, when I was told for

so many years that I was garbage.” She said. “I was brainwashed into believing that I wasn't my own person, capable of making decisions for myself.”

But now, even though Margaret struggles to heal from the trauma, she has help along the way from Gillian's Place, and there are good days – and as time passes, they are more frequent.



“It was comforting to meet other women in the same boat as me.”

Getting help healing from the trauma of abuse is important because it:

- Allows women to feel more in control of their lives and entitled to their own thoughts and feelings
- Allows women to develop closer relationships with others
- Helps women to free themselves from their traumatic past
- Can help relieve pain and depression

Women can and do recover from abuse-related trauma. Gillian's Place can help women on their journey toward regaining a sense of safety and control over their lives and work on healing and moving forward.



Giving creates a lasting impact

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Our volunteers contributed more than 400 hours of service during the 2013-2014 year. These dedicated people of all ages and backgrounds are an integral part of our organization. Individual volunteers, groups, and students all joined together to help countless women, children and youth live free from violence and abuse. More than 50 volunteers worked in a wide range of areas:

- Board Members and Committees
- Volunteers with special skills contributed their expertise in various areas, including: Fund Development, Hairdressing, Medical, Dental Hygiene, Photography, and Interpreters.
- Program Support – childcare, crafts and activities for families and organizing donations, shelter care and maintenance
- Projects and Events – Gillian’s Place Events, Third Party run events, Advocacy and community leadership.
- Ongoing, daily support – administrative tasks and spreading the word about Gillian’s Place!

Gillian’s Place would not be able to accomplish all that we do without the support of our volunteers. We thank each of them for their compassion and commitment.

COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

Gillian’s Place understands the role that everyone in our community shares in keeping our women and children in Niagara safe and our violence against women programs sustainable. As donors, volunteers and champions, your gifts are investments in our work and they enable us to plan our spending and create new programs. Whether you give \$5 a month, volunteer a few hours of your time, or have given a major gift, friends like you mean the world to us. And it’s important for the women and children we help to know that they have people like you on their side – people who may not know them, but care about their safety and wellbeing. It’s this support that keeps their spirits high and helps them take the courageous steps toward a life free of violence.

Your investment is even more important during this time when it is vital for Gillian’s Place to be flexible enough to respond to changing needs. Your gifts allow us to respond with innovative programs that go beyond emergency shelter and help break the cycle of violence for good.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kelly McNaughton – President
- Karen Smith Curtis – Past President
- Troy Brooks – Vice President
- Selvum Pillay – Secretary
- Warren Hoshizaki – Treasurer
- Sharon Abbey – Director
- Karen Tribble – Director
- Walter Harmidarow – Director
- Michelle Hagar – Director
- Michele Auger – Director





Walk a mile in HER shoes

The Men's March to end Violence Against Women



In 2006, Gillian's Place hosted our first Walk a Mile in HER Shoes event. Forty men came out to Market Square in downtown St. Catharines to don the heels and raised \$10,000 for Gillian's Place. Since then the event has moved indoors to the Pen Centre and last year over 230 men and boys participated and raised an astounding \$135,000 for Gillian's Place while hundreds of spectators cheered them on!!



After creating a very successful "Walk a Mile in HER Shoes" event, we were asked by many women in our community to start a walk in which they could participate. Well, we heard them loud and clear! On May 9, 2013 we held the inaugural Walk for Women event and it was a huge success. Over 200 women and children participated and \$50,000 was raised to support the work of Gillian's Place, doubling our first year participation and fundraising goals. The Walk for Women is an event for women and children to join together to end violence against women and girls! It provides the opportunity for mothers and daughters, sisters, friends and co-workers to come together to say with a unified voice that woman abuse is unacceptable and to take a stand together against domestic violence and woman abuse.



Last November, shelters across the province launched the Wrapped in Courage purple scarf campaign, engaging their communities to join in raising the profile of the often overlooked issue of woman abuse in Ontario. The purple scarf is a symbol that shows that it takes the strength of an entire community to end violence against women.

During the month of November, everyone across Ontario was invited to participate in showing abused women that they have our support. More than 11,000 people participated in the Wrapped in Courage campaign in its first year including local and provincial dignitaries, like Premier Kathleen Wynne, and MPP Jim Bradley.

This is the first time shelters across the province have come together with a united message of hope and unity, and the impact has been felt in our communities year round. Gillian's Place is excited to continue this campaign in 2014.





“My son was always so passionate about helping women, and Gillian’s Place does such great work, we were are really happy to be able to help them”

Nazlin Merani

This past year, we were also humbled by the support we received in memory of the lives of some very special people.



At a young age, Arif Merani knew that he wanted to make a difference in other people’s lives. His ambitions were laser-focused on a path to becoming a practicing lawyer to help those who could not help themselves. He was to graduate in December 2013 with a Bachelor’s

degree, majoring in Law, specializing in Aboriginal law. He demonstrated the qualities of leadership, empathy, kindness, giving, friendship, selflessness, and was actively involved in projects supporting programs and rights for abused women. Arif was taken on October 15th, 2013, at the young age of 22 years old. He was hit by a car when he stepped out of his vehicle to inspect a flat tire on his way back to University after visiting his family at home in Niagara Falls, ON for Thanksgiving.

In his honour, the Merani family are continuing his good work, by raising funds and awareness for Gillian’s Place to support the thousands of abused women and their children who rely on us each year. To date, this family has raised over \$20,000 dollars in Arif’s memory.



In May 2013, we received a call from a woman named Sandy. Her sister Peggy had just lost her battle with cancer, and as one of her last wishes, left a gift in her will to Gillian’s Place. When Peggy began to think of organizations she wanted to support, she didn’t yet

know of Gillian’s Place, but knew that she wanted to leave a gift to an organization that helps abused women. After researching several organizations online, Peggy and her family decided that Gillian’s Place would be the recipient of this willed bequest. We don’t often have the opportunity to know why someone has chosen Gillian’s Place as a benefactor, so we were so grateful to be able to meet Peggy’s sister and brother in law. During this time, we were able to learn about what a wonderful woman Peggy was, what her wishes were, and why.

Peggy’s generous gift has helped to form the financial bedrock for new and innovative programs and services provided by Gillian’s Place that we would not be able to financially support otherwise. Her gift will be felt by future generations of women and children escaping violence.

If you would like to learn more about how you can join Peggy and the Merani family in leaving a lasting impact for women and children in our community whose lives are forever changed by Gillian’s Place, please call Nicole Regehr, Community Development Manager at 905-684-4000 ext. 231, or email nicole@gilliansplace.com

Balance Sheet

From the audited financial statements

As at March 31, 2014

	2014 \$	2013 \$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and unrestricted short-term investments	1,669,221	1,036,451
Internally restricted cash and short term investments	429,798	1,848,364
Accounts receivable	48,818	34,267
Prepaid expenses	14,338	13,936
	2,162,175	2,933,018
Internally restricted long-term investments	1,030,772	-
Property, plant and equipment	2,824,745	2,936,518
	3,855,517	2,936,518
	6,017,692	5,869,536
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	100,662	105,250
Accrued wages	123,171	105,839
Deferred revenue	12,493	20,772
	236,326	231,861
Forgivable loan	1,004,800	1,130,400
	1,241,126	1,362,261
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted funds		
General fund	1,496,051	852,793
Invested in capital assets	1,819,945	1,806,118
	3,315,996	2,658,911
Restricted funds		
Special projects fund	33,238	34,701
Sustaining Operations Fund	927,332	1,313,663
Facilities Fund	500,000	500,000
	1,460,570	1,848,364
	4,776,566	4,507,275
	6,017,692	5,869,536

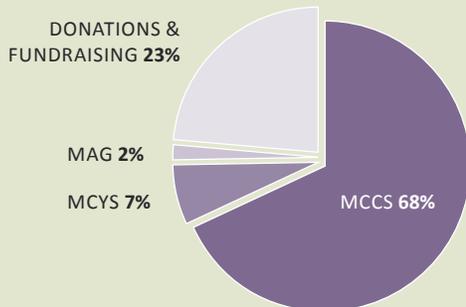
Statement of Revenue and Expenses by Fund

From the audited financial statements

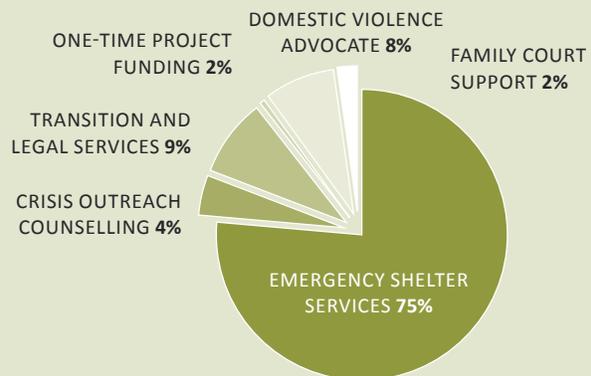
For the year ended March 31, 2014

	MCSS			MCYS	MAG	TOTAL	Non-ministry Funds	Combined Ministry and Non-ministry Funds 2013	Combined Ministry and Non-ministry Funds 2012
	Emergency Shelter Services	Crisis Outreach Counselling	Transition and Legal Services	One-Time Project Funding	Domestic Violence Advocate	Family Court Support			
REVENUES									
Ministry Funding	1,206,297	15,777	77,899	10,954	126,009	32,500	-	1,469,436	1,449,872
Donations & Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-	-	451,505	451,505	397,973
Investment Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-	102,011	102,011	37,159
Amortization & Other	7,491	-	-	-	-	-	125,600	133,091	133,279
Total Revenue	1,213,788	15,777	77,899	10,954	126,009	32,500	679,116	2,156,043	2,018,283
EXPENSES									
Wages and Benefits	828,354	42,348	100,107	-	45,317	31,783	-	1,047,909	1,029,606
Building, Equipment and Amortization	130,783	2,145	2,894	3,575	1,308	188	113,946	254,839	257,088
Other	101,291	895	6,611	8,447	56,218	983	-	174,445	180,200
	1,060,428	45,388	109,612	12,022	102,843	32,954	113,946	1,477,193	1,466,894
Central Administration Costs	213,024	30,330	32,839	-	27,539	-	271,866	575,598	446,765
Total Expenses	1,273,452	75,718	142,451	12,022	130,382	32,954	385,812	2,052,791	1,913,659
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses before unrealized gain on investments	(59,664)	(59,941)	(64,552)	(1,068)	(4,373)	(454)	293,304	103,252	104,624
Unrealized Gain on Investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	167,502	167,502	-
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses	(59,664)	(59,941)	(64,552)	(1,068)	(4,373)	(454)	460,806	270,754	104,624

OPERATING FUNDING SOURCES for the Year Ended March 31, 2014



GOVERNMENT FUNDED PROGRAM EXPENSES for the Year Ended March 31, 2014





GILLIAN'S PLACE
empowering abused women of niagara

SERVING ST. CATHARINES & NORTH NIAGARA



Serving St. Catharines and North Niagara



PO Box 1387, St. Catharines
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gilliansplace.com



support line **905-684-8331**

