



GILLIAN'S PLACE
empowering abused women of niagara

SERVING ST. CATHARINES & NORTH NIAGARA

STRENGTHENING OUR CORE DEEPENING OUR IMPACT

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 – 2020





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late winter of 2016 the Board of Directors commenced a strategic planning process. We did so to establish a clear and informed direction for the organization moving forward – one that would build on our strengths and resonate with our staff and leadership. The planning process has also provided us with the opportunity to refresh our foundational statements, and renew our commitment to realize them.

The successful implementation of our new Plan Strengthening Our Core, Deepening Our Impact, hinges on our ability to nurture and maintain our current collaborations and partnerships, while reaching out to secure new opportunities to strengthen our work. We look forward to working with our community partners to achieve this.

We have mapped out our objectives and defined our strategies and now have an action plan in place to ensure their completion.





Our strategic priorities for the period of 2017 – 2020 are as follows:

1

Strengthen our Core

Enhance our capacity to deliver exceptional services

2

Demonstrate Excellence

Assess need and deepen our impact

3

Expand our Collaboration

Initiate partnerships and engage community

4

Sustain

Ensure a strong sustainable financial future

We have also committed to measuring our impact. Over the next three years, we will enhance our capacity to effectively evaluate our work. In doing so, we will build an evidence base to expand awareness and education within our community and ensure our sustainability. We are excited about our new strategic priorities and look forward to having a positive and measurable impact in our community. Join Us!

Jennifer Wallace

President, Gillian's Place Board of Director

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1977, Gillian's Place is located in St. Catharines, Ontario. We are the only emergency shelter serving abused women in the North Niagara area including Grimsby, Lincoln, West Lincoln, Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines and Thorold. Gillian's Place holds the distinction of being the first shelter for abused women and children in the Niagara Region, and one of the very first shelters in Ontario. Today, there are over 100 shelters located across the province. Gillian's Place started as an 8-bed grassroots facility and has grown to a fully accessible 18 bedroom - 34 bed facility, offering safe refuge for women and children fleeing abuse, a 24/7 emergency support line, as well as non-residential services.



Program and Service Snapshot¹

In the last fiscal year our highly secure, access-controlled building **housed 284 women and children**. Staff responded to **2,296 calls** on our 24-hour support line and provided counselling and transitional support **service to 871 women**. The Child and Youth Counsellors **worked with 105 children**, in an ongoing commitment to ensuring that young people who are exposed to woman abuse receive the support they need to heal, learn about healthy relationships and break the cycle of violence. The Family Court Support Worker and the in-house lawyer **walked alongside 748 women**, providing them with support, advice, and crucial information to help them navigate through challenging applications, paperwork, and justice systems. The Gillian's Place partnership with Women's Place of South Niagara and Family and Children's Services (FACS) Niagara resulted in 502 women and 707 children who were involved with the Children's Aid Society being served by our Domestic Violence Consultants.

¹ The Program and Service Snapshot is largely taken from the 2017 Gillian's Place Annual Report



- Emergency Shelter and Support Line
- Counselling for Women, Children and Youth
- Outreach Crisis Counselling and Support
- Transitional and Housing Support
- Legal Services
- Domestic Violence Consultants - FACS Niagara & Gillian's Place Domestic Violence Response Initiative
- Community Education and Outreach

Now in our 41st year of operation, Gillian's Place is a well-recognized social service organization in the Niagara Region community.

OUR FOUNDATION

The strategic planning process gave us an opportunity to consult with internal and external stakeholders and refresh our Vision, Mission and Value statements. Our work is driven by these foundational statements that guide us in all that we do. They keep us focused and accountable for the services we provide as we set out to achieve our goals together.

VISION

We seek a socially just community where all women and children are free from violence and abuse.

MISSION

To empower women and their children fleeing abuse by providing safety, support, and a range of services and to raise awareness about root causes to end the cycle of violence and abuse.

OUR VALUES

Our organizational values inform how Gillian's Place is governed, how our services are delivered, and how we work together. Simply said, our values permeate everything we do. We honour the innate strength of survivors in everything that we do and commit to the practice and principles of self-determination.



Collaboration

We are better together. We see our community partners, funders, clients, and each other as allies and our shared work as the only way to achieve lasting impact. We come hospitably to the table with openness and humility.

Integrity

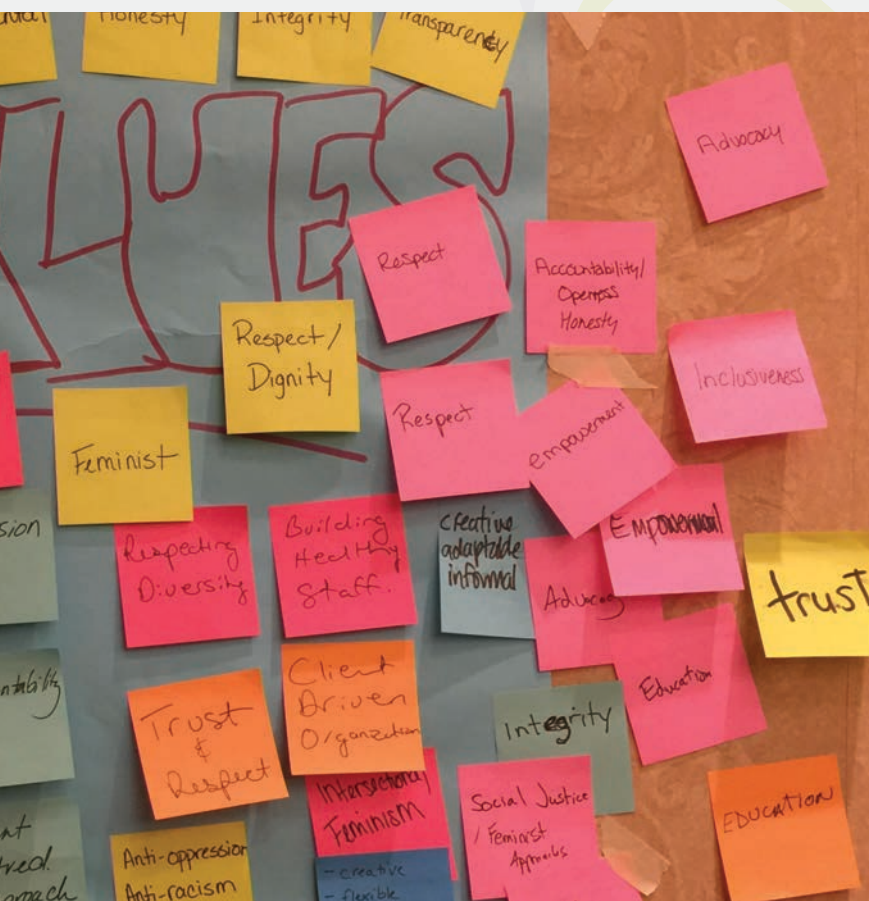
We act with uncompromising honesty, respect and fairness with the women we serve, with our community and with each other. We welcome questions and we answer sincerely.

Woman - Centredness

We're here for all women and for each woman. Our language and our work is informed by each woman's context, stage, dignity, and right to self-determination and are more important than our own agendas or the systems within which we work.

Courage

We are here to change things. Regardless of traditional mindsets, power structures and norms, we welcome the challenge of stepping out and speaking up. We work within an intersectional, feminist, and anti-racism/anti-oppression framework and we honour each other's courage in doing this work.



OUR PLANNING PROCESS

In November of 2016 the Gillian's Place Strategic Planning Committee reconvened to review previous planning work undertaken and to confirm a new planning process for the organization. In February 2017, Gillian's Place initiated a planning process to determine the strategic priorities and develop a strategic plan to guide the organization over the next 3 years. Adobe Consulting Services was engaged to facilitate this initiative. An environmental scan and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis process was conducted from February to April 2017.

THIS PROCESS INCLUDED:

- 
- on-line surveys
 - interviews and focus groups with forty-nine (49) individuals and key stakeholders inside and outside of Gillian's Place
 - a review of internal documents, and a selection of recent access to justice literature
 - external research conducted by the consultants



In early June 2017, Gillian's Place staff and the current board members participated in a day long strategic planning session to confirm the strategic priorities for the organization and identify what success would look like. The draft strategic plan was crafted in June and approved in July. Implementation recommendations were provided by the consultants and a detailed Implementation Plan will be developed by the organization over the summer term.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Gillian's Place holds the distinction of being the first shelter for abused women and children in the Niagara Region, and one of the very first shelters in Ontario. We have a long-standing and stable reputation as a compassionate and caring provider of non-residential and shelter services for women and children facing abuse. Gillian's Place has an energetic leadership team; skilled, loyal and committed staff; and a strong and capable Board. Over the next three years, Gillian's Place will strengthen our current infrastructure to achieve service excellence, ensure the sustainability of our operations and capitalize on strategic opportunities to deepen our impact through partnerships.

1

Strengthen our Core

Enhance our capacity to deliver exceptional services

2

Demonstrate Excellence

Assess need and deepen our impact

3

Expand our Collaboration

Initiate partnerships and engage community

4

Sustain

Ensure a strong sustainable financial future

1

PRIORITY 1 STRENGTHEN OUR CORE -

Enhance our capacity to deliver exceptional services

Gillian's Place will focus on strengthening our organizational infrastructure and building the capacity of our human resources to deliver service excellence. The organization will undertake policy review and development, implement operational planning and support team development, investing in training for staff and board to expand our knowledge base on key issues and ensuring cultural competency in everything we do at the operational and governance level.

We Will:

- Review our organizational policies to ensure that clear and comprehensive practices are in place for all staff to ensure service excellence and effective day-to-day operations.
- Develop and implement an operational planning process.
- Design and implement a plan to strengthen organizational cultural competency that includes regular and ongoing training for staff and Board in the areas of anti-racism and anti-oppression, cultural competence, Trans-inclusion, mental health and addictions and trauma-informed care.

Strengthen our Core

Enhance our capacity to deliver exceptional services

PRIORITY 2 DEMONSTRATE EXCELLENCE -

2

Assess need and deepen our impact

The organization will develop a Program Planning and Evaluation Framework. This will help to define goals for our programs and services, and identify measures that drive data collection that can be used to evaluate progress. This can support the organization to monitor and assess its impact in an ongoing way and will support the collection of data that can be used to continually improve our services and inform program planning, support service direction and community engagement/public education.

Building on the above, Gillian's Place will carve out a niche for itself to provide public education and build awareness on the root causes and issues involved in violence against women as an effective strategy for prevention in the Niagara Region.

We will:

- Develop and implement a Program Planning and Evaluation Framework that includes an annual planning cycle to develop program level goals and establish measures and a data collection process for monitoring progress to achieve them.
- Use the data compiled above to guide future program development, public education and awareness building, community engagement and fund development.

Demonstrate Excellence

Assess need and deepen our impact

3

PRIORITY 3 EXPAND OUR COLLABORATION-

Initiate partnerships and engage community

Gillian's Place will seek to strengthen existing service agreements and establish new partnerships and collaborations with community organizations to build bridges and strengthen access to and/or integrate services for their clients. We will also join like-minded community partners to take on a more active and visible role in support of women's rights. As a sought after community partner, Gillian's Place will need to be strategic in deciding which partnerships most benefit their clients and also support their niche in raising public awareness on the causes and issues that underpin violence against women as an effective strategy for prevention.

We will:

- Seek to strengthen existing service agreements and establish new community partnerships designed to strengthen access to and/or increase integration of services to better meet the needs of our clients.
- Join with community partners to develop a shared voice and take on a more active and visible role in support of women's rights.

Expand our Collaboration

Initiate partnerships and engage community

PRIORITY 4 SUSTAIN-

4

Ensure a strong sustainable financial future

From service excellence, solid organizational planning and evaluation processes a strong evidence base will be created to develop an exceptional case for support, strengthening fund development efforts. Gillian's Place will develop a broad three-year fund development plan that will identify current and potential funding partners in the public and private sector and inform a long-term sustainability plan.

We will:

- Develop a strong case for support building community excitement and engagement in their fund development efforts
- Create a three-year fund development plan that identifies current and potential funding partners in both the public and private sectors, and that informs a long-term sustainability plan
- Strengthen existing partnerships and seek out new collaborations to support fund development initiatives
- Explore service augmentation opportunities to attract sustainable revenue

Sustain

Ensure a strong sustainable financial future

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Gillian's Place is committed to honouring its values of Integrity and Accountability and wants to ensure transparency with the community, allied organizations, funders, donors and other stakeholders. To this end we have developed monitoring and accountability mechanisms to support the success and broad communication of the strategic priorities and milestone achievement.

With the support of our consultants the Strategic Planning Committee has developed Implementation Recommendations to inform our Board approved Operational Plan. Our leadership team will operationalize the Plan and will report semi-annually to the Board on progress, challenges and achievements. The Board of Directors will report on the Strategic Plan at its annual members meeting (AGM).

A new strategic planning cycle will commence in the late spring of 2020 and the current Strategic Plan will be evaluated prior to commencing the new planning cycle.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The strategic planning process would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of so many people. The Board of Directors would like to thank our Executive Director and her leadership team for supporting the strategic planning process and the work of the Committee.

Strategic planning is only successful when those most impacted by decisions being made are consulted and engaged. The women and children who use our services played a big role in helping us arrive at the 2017 -2020 Strategic Plan and we would like to thank them for their interest and involvement.

We might be bragging, but it goes without saying that our staff have been an essential part of this planning process providing front-line expertise, input, time and encouragement. We thank them for all that they do every day.

Special acknowledgment to the Strategic Planning Committee Members – Tanja Loeb, Melissa Fry, Karen Tribble, Robert McGray, Samah Marei and Jennifer Wallace.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders, donors, and community supporters without whom our work would not be possible.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- Janet Allan
- Michele Auger
- Maria Bau-Coote
- Cindy Bourassa
- Samah Marei
- Robert McGray
- Karen Tribble
- Jennifer Wallace
- Angela Zangari



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