



**GILLIAN'S  
PLACE**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

**Working to end  
gender-based  
violence in  
Niagara**



# LEADERSHIP TEAM

Nicole Regehr

*Executive Director*

Kristi Lawrence

*Director of Client Services*

Rhonda Sliwa

*Director of Finance*

Graeme Dargavel

*Director of Development & Communications*

Marion Wright

*Manager of Legal Services*

Amy Stott

*Manager of Counselling Services*

Zacheriah Loeb-Houston

*Manager of Strategy & Operations*

Jami Coughler

*Manager of Quality & Engagement*

Linda Bowden

*HR & Admin Supervisor*



*Our Leadership Team*

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jennifer Wallace

*Chair*

Franca Vavaroutsos

*Treasurer*

Carolyn Mullins

*Secretary*

Danielle Anders

*Director*

Andrea Lombardi

*Director*

Samah Marei

*Director*

Kristina Newman

*Director*

Jenny Vu

*Director*

Janet Allan

*(retired 09/2021)*

Darryl Andree

*(retired 10/2021)*

Tim Empringham

*(retired 05/2022)*

Thank you to  
our Board of Directors,  
who last year collectively  
volunteered over

**325**  
**HOURS**

# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE

## Another year of supporting survivors and their friends and allies.

Another year of being reminded about the need and life-saving nature of our work.

Another year of remaining grateful for our funders and community who enable our work.

As we began our 45th year of service, with calls for safety and support at an all-time high, we felt it important to provide a holistic overview of our work to end gender-based violence in Niagara. Over four decades, our organization and sector have come so far. Today ...

## We're more than shelter.

We're here 24/7, 365 days a year, with a range of practical, compassionate support services.

## Yet, sadly, our work is not done.

Much of our work is guided by our Strategic Plan, *Breaking Down Barriers & Creating Lasting Change*. A significant step forward in breaking down barriers occurred shortly after our fiscal year began.



Gillian's Place revealed a new organizational and brand identity. At its core, this brand reflects our critical examination of how racism, oppression, violence, and power structures have caused barriers to equity, access, and participation in society and within our organization. Today, we are proud to offer services and spaces that are welcoming and inclusive to all women, children, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, trans, and non-binary people facing gendered abuse.

The need for this mandate has never been greater. The pandemic has pushed marginalized groups to the breaking point and violence against them continues to rise, highlighting horrific human rights violations. As you will see, our service numbers continue to reflect these devastating realities. The last two years have been gruelling, terrifying, and heartbreaking in far too many scenarios. Despite this, Gillian's Place continues to make strides in ensuring we are effectively meeting every survivor where they are at in their individual journey, whether they are living in our shelter, our second-stage homes, or in the community.

Throughout this report, you will learn more about the scope of our work. As you will read, our talented and dedicated staff and volunteers work tirelessly to break down barriers and empower survivors to live lives full of independence and prosperity. You will learn more about the essential support services we provide, beyond crisis support and our emergency shelter.



## A letter from the executive (continued)

This past year, we've added additional resources to our Public Education and Violence Prevention Programs. With these resources comes a renewed focus on educating younger generations, other service agencies, and community groups about our work in a post-pandemic context. Through Women and Gender Equality Canada, we are developing and implementing a training program for journalists and students of journalism on the responsible reporting of gender-based violence and gendered issues. We look forward to updating our community on this 30-month-long project that will develop a promising practice and initiate systemic change.

Our team has forged new partnerships that have enabled a revitalization of our *Stepping Stones Program*. Partnerships with local banks, cellular companies and other corporate and individual donors are playing an impactful role in making the lives of our clients less burdensome as they move toward independence.

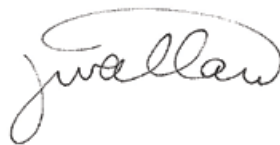
While we are proud of our progress and work, there is still so much to do. Accordingly, we have a bold vision for the future born out of the need to enhance and expand our current Gibson Place facility – adding more beds, counselling spaces, and group programming areas which will reflect the growing and diverse needs of our community's most vulnerable.

We hope you enjoy reading our report on our work. As you will see, we are and must continue working together to end gender-based violence in Niagara.

Gratefully,



**Nicole Regehr**  
Executive Director



**Jennifer Wallace**  
Chair, Board of Directors



# OUR SERVICE NUMBERS

## EMERGENCY SHELTER



**161**  
ADULTS



**94**  
CHILDREN



**255**  
LIVED IN OUR  
SHELTER

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

**11,933**  
TOTAL SERVED  
through our  
community  
outreach



**9,850**  
crisis calls and  
texts answered



**724**  
obtained legal advice  
and support



**400**  
attended counselling  
appointments



**239**  
received transitional  
housing support

**106**

CHILDREN  
living in the community  
were seen by our Child  
& Youth Counsellors

**644**

received help from our  
Domestic Violence  
Consultants at FACS  
Niagara

Since the start of the pandemic,  
we have responded to a...

- ↑ 150% increase in crisis calls/texts
- ↑ 98% increase across community outreach services
- ↑ 91% increase in demand across all areas of programming

**12,188**  
TOTAL SERVED

# WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Gender-based violence has many different subsets and definitions that fall under the umbrella of gender-based violence that are important to be considered when advocating, supporting, and raising awareness. At GP, we are here for those experiencing any form of gendered abuse.

**Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** is violence committed against someone because of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender. It is the types of abuse that women, girls, Two-Spirit, trans, and non-binary people are at the highest risk of experiencing.

Concerned about  
what you or a loved one  
are experiencing?

Call/text 905.684.8331  
24/7

## Gender-based violence includes...

**Domestic Violence (DV)** is a pattern of behaviour used by a person to gain control and power over another person. DV occurs between individuals who have, or have had, an intimate relationship, a parent and child, siblings, roommates, and friends. The use of isolation tactics to maintain power and control are common in DV relationships.

**Violence Against Women (VAW)** is any act of gender-based violence that results in suffering or mental harm to women. VAW is more specific than gender-based violence because it only applies to people who present or identify as women.

**Human Trafficking** is the act of recruiting, sheltering, and/or transporting through threats, force, deception, and coercion for sexual exploitation or forced labour. Human trafficking is recognized as a form of gender-based violence as the majority of those who are trafficked are women and girls.

**Cyber Misogyny** summarizes the many forms of gendered harassment, hate, and abusive behaviour that take place online and target women and girls. Cyber misogyny specifically involves patterns of hate speech, sexist, racist, homophobic, and transphobic behaviours. This can include revenge pornography, non-consensual sharing of private images, child exploitation, and cyberstalking.

**Forced Marriage** is when one or both individuals have not given their consent to be married. This can include child marriage, where unions that are not consensual nor age appropriate are forced upon young women and girls.

**Sexual Violence** is any form of unwanted sexual contact, including sexual assault and sexual harassment. Sexual violence is categorized as gender-based violence as it reflects and is rooted in gender inequality for women, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, trans, and non-binary people. Sexual violence can occur between strangers, acquaintances, family, friends, colleagues, and people in intimate relationships.

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)** is a form of gender-based violence that occurs only within intimate partner relationships. An intimate partner can be a person with whom another person shares ongoing physical or sexual contact and an emotional connection. It has been shown that women disproportionately experience the most extreme forms of IPV, such as sexual assault, being choked, and being assaulted or threatened with a weapon. IPV can also be known as dating violence.

**Other forms:** Elder Abuse, Caregiver Violence, Female Genital Mutilation

*We utilized The Violence Against Women Learning Network for the above information.*

To learn more about  
gender-based violence,  
please visit our resource page.

[gilliansplace.com/resource-centre/#safety](https://gilliansplace.com/resource-centre/#safety)



# TYPES OF ABUSE

Abuse involves patterns of behaviour intended to establish and maintain control over partners, family, individuals, or groups. No matter the age, gender, socio-economic status, or ethnicity, anyone can experience abuse. All abuse is rooted in **COERCIVE CONTROL**. Coercive control occurs when a pattern of threats, assault, intimidation, or humiliation is used as a tool to scare, punish, or instill fear.

## PHYSICAL

occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions and cause harm.

## EMOTIONAL

occurs when someone repeatedly says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless to control them.

## FINANCIAL

occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources.

## CULTURAL & SPIRITUAL

occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, isolate, or control.

## SEXUAL

occurs when a person is forced to take part in sexual activity unwillingly.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control.

## VERBAL

occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual.



## Public Education & Violence Prevention Programs

Since September 2021,  
**567 community members**  
have participated in our Violence Prevention  
and Public Education Programs

### COMING SOON:

- A young men's program
- More resources for our community

Our Violence Prevention Program and Public Education Program offers training and information sessions to schools, community agencies, and businesses on how best to support survivors, should they identify someone who is being abused, or should they receive a disclosure of abuse. Our program aims to work towards a society that is void from violence and abuse where our services are no longer needed.

**Jami Coughler**  
Manager of Quality & Engagement

# WAYS IN WHICH WE SUPPORT OUR CLIENTS

**We work to break the cycle of violence and abuse with children and youth.**



Our child and youth counsellors offer support through one-on-one, family, and group counselling. Our counsellors utilize therapeutic activities to address separation and divorce, healthy relationships, self-esteem, bullying, and emotional regulation.



We offer support groups for mothers to ensure they have the tools and resources necessary to support their children.

**We ensure those who turn to us for protection have resources in their journey to safety and freedom.**



We offer safety planning for survivors, their families, and allies experiencing gender-based violence to enhance safety and support, unique to each area of the survivor's life.



We provide urgent and essential referrals to community agencies to increase capacity for safety and protection.

**We empower survivors to understand they deserve a life free from abuse and violence.**



Often, survivors question their ability and deservingness to accept support. We help support the feelings of guilt, regret, shame, and doubt.



Abusers use power and control tactics to decrease an individual's self-worth and increase isolation from other relationships. We work to improve self-care, self-talk, self-esteem, and self-discovery with survivors.

**We meet clients at whatever point they are at in their journey by implementing goals and addressing their varying and unique needs.**



Our counsellors work with clients to empower, set goals, and provide hope that they can build a life free from violence and abuse.



Gillian's Place operates within a harm-reduction framework that reduces the health and social harms associated with substance use. We offer coping mechanisms, community support referrals, and harm reduction techniques.



Our Second-Stage family counsellor provides clients with wrap-around support to empower and ensure they have safety, security, and independence.

**We educate on domestic violence and abuse to ensure survivors are safe, and to increase support capacity among our community of allies.**



It is imperative that survivors understand that to end the cycle means being aware of warning signs. We provide information and support on the cycle of violence, types of abuse, power and control tactics, and why survivors stay in abusive partnerships.



We provide information on unhealthy relationships, respect in relationships, boundaries, and red flags.



# THREE YEARS OF EXPANDED SECOND-STAGE SUPPORT

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Branscombe Family Foundation for their generous and multi-year support in implementing our Second-Stage Family Program. Through this program, we offer ten additional rent-geared-to-income apartments for mothers and children transitioning to a safe and independent life. Our skilled Second-Stage Family Counsellors provide intensive counselling and life-skills support to clients during their tenancy. With their philanthropy, along with other generous donors and partners, we continue to see inspiring impact through this program...

I came into this program filled with so much uncertainty. I was terrified to move out of the shelter into my own new apartment with my four-month-old. I didn't know who I was anymore or how to be alone. This program helped ease the transition and adjustment. My counsellor was ALWAYS there to listen to me and offer suggestions and anything she could to help us along. It all helped me so much. Everyone made it all a bit easier and manageable. I grew over my time in the program; I set goals and pushed myself to do the things I would never have dreamed of doing before. I reunited with my older children, and now my oldest is living with us. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

**Mother**

**Second-Stage Family Program**

## BEYOND SHELTER & CORE SERVICES

### A Revitalization of Our Stepping Stones Program

Our Stepping Stones Program encompasses several initiatives to connect our clients with items, resources, and services that are vital to moving forward, improving their safety, or increasing their independence. This program is offered through a series of partnerships with local businesses and with support from generous donors.



#### FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Many of our clients experience financial abuse and do not have a bank account of their own. It is important for them to open their own bank account as soon as possible. Meridian Credit Union has compassionately partnered with us to assist clients with setting up their bank accounts and waiving their monthly account fees for one year. RBC has also stepped up and agreed to help our clients when needed.



#### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Access to the internet is increasingly considered a human right, and having a functioning cell phone has become almost essential to connecting with supports, staying connected to loved ones, and maintaining independence. GP has partnered with a local phone dealer, Wireless Hotspot and Chatr, to quickly and easily open accounts for our clients and provide them with a pre-paid phone plan for two months.



#### TECHNOLOGY SAFETY PLANNING

Thanks to generous donors and grants, we can offer clients living in our shelter and second-stage homes with Chromebooks and other devices. With this, all of our counsellors are provided training on how to assist clients with staying safe in the digital space. Increasingly, especially throughout the pandemic, we have seen abusers becoming more sophisticated with online abuse. Our attention to this area is vital to ensuring the ongoing safety of our clients.

# INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS AT GILLIAN'S PLACE

Our IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Committee is comprised of a wide cross-section of staff dedicated to ensuring an anti-racism and anti-oppression lens permeates all facets of our work. Some of IDEA's highlights include:



Implementing strategies for general awareness around holidays and culturally significant advocacy, ensuring important and meaningful days are recognized at GP.



Ongoing policy and procedure reviews. Recently, we have reviewed our food services policies to ensure culturally sound foods are offered. We have also reviewed accessibility items available to clients to ensure an improved shelter experience.



Anti-racism and anti-oppression training for new and current staff, including allocating time for equity conversations at each staff meeting.



Establishing processes for staff to self-identify their name and pronouns, and sharing pronouns in public communications.

Canada



Women and Gender Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

## RESPONSIBLE MEDIA REPORTING OF GENDERED ISSUES

Gillian's Place has been selected as a recipient of funding through Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to conduct a 30-month-long project that will develop and implement training for journalists and students of journalism on the responsible reporting of GBV and gendered issues.



To learn more about responsible media reporting at Gillian's Place, please visit the following link.

[gilliansplace.com/responsiblemedia](https://gilliansplace.com/responsiblemedia)



The media play a critical role in the public's understanding of gender-based violence and gendered issues. WAGE funding for this project has permitted us to do a deep dive into the issues of how media currently covers subsets of gender-based violence, gender equality, issues that are generally considered to be women's issues, and issues that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and other racially-marginalized people; gender- and sexually-diverse people; people with lived experience with a disability or mental health needs; and people whose identities intersect in multiple ways.

We are grateful to the women and men who are engaged with their communities, who have shared their expertise and insights with us, and the local media who have been generous with their time in discussing how they currently do their jobs.

The knowledge gleaned from the literature review and our many interviews will be instrumental in preparing a guide for journalists and the training program we are developing for current journalists and students of journalism.

Laura Ip  
Project Manager

# COMMUNITY ALLIES

Together, we are working to end gender-based violence in Niagara.

## CAA COMMUNITY BOOST

In the spring of 2021, Gillian's Place was welcomed to CAA Niagara's Community Boost family! We are so thankful to CAA Niagara's staff for selecting GP as a recipient of this grant, especially amongst so many deserving organizations and initiatives in Niagara. Beyond generous financial support, CAA far exceeded our expectations and created a wave of impact throughout the year. In addition to being presenting sponsor for Walk a Mile – YOUR Style, we welcomed CEO Peter Van Hezewyk as an Ambassador to the event. Peter encouraged CAA's staff, board, and members to walk to end gender-based violence. CAA stepped up many times throughout the year, delivering gift cards, treats, and other caring items for our clients and staff. During Woman Abuse Prevention Month, their team stood in solidarity (wearing purple scarves) for survivors in our community. Oh, and have you happened to see our beautiful CAA-GP Tow Truck?

Thank you, CAA! We are grateful for your long-standing support and for being considered part of the Community Boost Family!



## INDIVIDUAL SPOTLIGHT

### Becky Goulet

It is hard to put into words just how special our close friends and supporters are to us at GP. Becky Goulet of Trailblaze Realty Group is one of our valued special community advocates and supporters. Becky has played an integral role in the story of hope, support, and choices as a longtime monthly donor, volunteer, and corporate sponsor. Becky was one of our first-ever female Walk a Mile Ambassadors this past year, and garnered tremendous support from family, friends, and colleagues throughout West Niagara. Becky also packaged and delivered beautiful Easter baskets for our shelter and second-stage clients with her friends and community connections. Thank you, Becky!



## HOLIDAY MAGIC

The past holiday season was one that we will all remember as special. Our generous partners at markmeldrum.com stepped up in a big way, fulfilling all of our shelter and second-stage clients' wish lists. Not only did they go above and beyond again (they supplied backpacks and financial support for our Second Stage Family Program), they stored all eight vans full of gifts at their offices. This incredible support with the beautiful gifts from *Barb's Bunch* in West Niagara enabled Gillian's Place to turn our focus to helping Gillian's Place support more families living in the community who were struggling during the holidays. Thanks to over 120 donors, more than 120 families living in the community received much-needed support and empowerment through our Sponsored Family Program.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SUPPORTERS

This International Women's Day, we had abundant support from many community allies to ensure the women we are entrusted to protect were celebrated and recognized for their courage and bravery. From long-standing community partners to those building new community connections with GP, over \$17,000 was raised through fundraising to help support survivors. Along with vital funds raised on International Women's Day, our clients were treated to delicious cookies from Boxed Cookies and Co. generously donated by CAA Niagara, enjoyed with decadent coffee kindly donated from Starbucks Glendale. Thank you to CAA Niagara, Rise Above Restaurant, Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, Starbucks Glendale, The Hare Wine & Co., & Van Noort Flower Studio for helping Gillian's Place empower women and commemorate women's achievements on International Women's Day.



### INDIVIDUAL SPOTLIGHT

## MICHAEL SOMMER

Michael Sommer of Royal LePage has been a leader in hosting unique fundraising initiatives that have created outstanding and meaningful contributions to Gillian's Place. Michael continually challenges himself to support those most vulnerable by enduring physical expeditions that not only raise funds for Gillian's Place but raises awareness across the globe on the issue of gender-based violence. Embarking on a Sahara Desert Trek in 2019, a Purcell Mountain Trek, and riding in a Smokin' Rockies Tour motorcycle ride from Calgary to Whistler in 2020, Michael has raised over \$21,000 for GP. We are so thankful that Michael chooses Gillian's Place as a beneficiary of these amazing adventures. Thank you, Michael!



# THE FUTURE OF OUR WORK

## Expanding to better serve the needs of our community

As this report highlights, the need and scope of our work have significantly expanded since we last turned to our community for support converting the former Victoria Public School to our current 34-bed shelter facility in 2005. Our current spaces no longer mirror the enhanced and expanding services we have been providing to survivors both living in our shelter or the greater community.

Gillian's Place is preparing to embark on a campaign that will fundamentally transform the ways in which we are able to provide compassionate and trauma-informed care to survivors, and their loved ones for generations to come. We are abundantly thankful to our individual, foundation, and corporate supporters who have helped address our most urgent needs for facility enhancement. We look forward to engaging the broader community to bring more safe beds and spaces to Niagara for survivors of gendered abuse.



## USE YOUR WILLPOWER

One of the most impactful ways our community can ensure Gillian's Place is well poised to respond to future requests for safety, and support for our friends and supporters to use their WillPower. Through your Will, you have more power to make a difference in the lives of those who have experienced violence and abuse. By gifting even a small percentage, you can leave a tremendous legacy to Gillian's Place while still supporting your loved ones.

### Questions?

Please speak with our Director of Development & Communications, Graeme Dargavel at **905.684.4000 ext. 254** or **graeme@gilliansplace.com** about our Dream Builder and Legacy Society.



To learn more about Will Power, please visit the following link.

[willpower.ca/charities/gillians-place](https://willpower.ca/charities/gillians-place)



# STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSES

For the year ending March 31, 2022

Revenue	2022	2021	2020	
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	1,974,935	1,973,649	1,664,294	51%
Donations and Fundraising	1,004,402	839,488	566,492	26%
Other Grants	415,933	420,190	104,952	11%
Investment and Other Income	158,211	168,817	219,791	4%
Forgiveness of Loan	138,162	138,162	138,162	4%
Rent Subsidies	104,798	102,022	60,335	3%
United Way Program Funding	48,550	48,550	48,552	1%
Ministry of the Attorney General	36,250	32,500	32,500	1%
	<b>3,881,241</b>	<b>3,723,378</b>	<b>2,835,078</b>	<b>100%</b>
Expenses				
Emergency Shelter	1,654,480	1,627,815	1,525,320	45%
One-time Projects	593,291	557,598	33,241	16%
Transition and Legal Services	518,588	328,206	363,106	14%
Community Development	234,515	209,451	193,777	6%
Administration	188,054	201,000	171,661	5%
Domestic Violence Consultant	192,898	151,636	145,662	5%
Outreach Counselling	152,724	134,971	150,466	4%
Depreciation	122,186	122,184	124,850	3%
Family Court Support	36,250	32,500	32,500	1%
	<b>3,692,986</b>	<b>3,365,361</b>	<b>2,740,583</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit) as per p.5 of Audited statements</b>	<b>188,255</b>	<b>358,017</b>	<b>94,495</b>	

Audited financial statements available upon request.



# GILLIAN'S PLACE

## Practical, Compassionate and Confidential Support Services.

**24-HR Phone/Text Support Line:** 905.684.8331

**Business Line:** 905.684.4000

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 1387

St. Catharines, ON L2R 7J8

 [gilliansplace.com](https://gilliansplace.com)

We welcome all women, children, Two-Spirit, genderqueer, trans, and non-binary people to Gillian's Place.



Gillian's Place gratefully carries out its work on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples.