



GILLIAN'S
PLACE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

We're More
Than Shelter

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Nicole Regehr

Executive Director

Kristi Lawrence

Director of Client Services & Facility Operations

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 & Infrastructure

Jami Coughler

Manager of Quality & Engagement

Linda Bowden

Manager of Human Resources & Administration

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Rachel Williams

(Retired May 2022)

Jenny Vu

(Retired March 2023)

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE

On June 4, 1977, Gillian's Place opened as one of the first shelters of its kind in Ontario.

Limited to just eight beds and supported solely by volunteers, the small safe house was full the first night.

Today, we are much more than safe shelter. In fact, the majority of our clients do not spend a single night in our emergency shelter.

During the pandemic, Women's Shelters Canada mobilized the "*More Than*" National Awareness Campaign, which aimed to illustrate how gender-based violence shelters are "more than" shelter.

With this campaign in mind, we are pleased to share our latest Annual Report...

We're More Than Shelter.

Throughout our report, you will learn how our services empower our clients beyond providing just a safe bed. We are proud of our client-centered, trauma-informed, and harm-reductive programs and services that meet survivors where they are in their journeys to safety and independence.

Last year, we launched our new outreach program, *Surviving to Thriving*. Knowing the benefits of offering spaces where survivors can share experiences as a group, our goal has been to develop a comprehensive program for caregivers and their children. Our new eight-week program is offered to clients living in shelter and the community who access our outreach services. The program is designed to provide caregivers and their children with individual and group support to develop coping mechanisms, communication, parenting and self-esteem, along with strategies to cope with the trauma they have experienced. Having seen the positive impact of this program, we have already secured funding to develop a similar program for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, as they experience disproportionately high rates of violence and abuse.

This past year, we have revamped and revitalized our Community Education and Violence Prevention Programs. While emergency intervention is critical in changing and saving lives, evidence-based prevention work is vital to ending the cycle of violence and abuse. As you will read, our skilled team has added new programs, such as training and certifying partner agencies about gender-based violence, as well as engaging and educating youth and teens about healthy relationships and allyship.

Our growth over four decades is only possible with our caring community's attention, compassion, and contributions. Every year, we must fundraise over one million dollars to ensure that all our programs are up and running when safe shelter, and more are needed.

*The 1983 24-bed
Centre Street Shelter*



*The 1977 8-bed
Salina Street Shelter*



*Current 34-bed
Gibson Place Shelter*

A letter from the executive (continued)

As always, we are abundantly grateful to those who support us annually. Whether you contribute financially, attend or host an event, or help fulfill our wish list, each and every gift represents hope, support, and intentional choices.

Sadly, demand for safe shelter and wrap-around support has never been higher. As a result, unfortunately, our main facility in St. Catharines can no longer meet this pressing need. Our Shelter too frequently operates more than its capacity. Our Community Outreach Programs served over 2,000 clients, despite not being designed to handle these high numbers.

In response to these demands and pressures, we have a bold vision to serve our community's needs better. Since January 2022, we have engaged our supporters and the broader community through our *Build a Safer Future Capital Campaign*. This \$8 million project will see an additional five private bedrooms and ten beds, along with a 9,000-square-foot addition to accommodate our wrap-around community outreach and violence prevention programs. In just over a year, we have raised over 65% of our goal to make this project a reality.

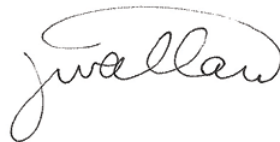
We are filled with renewed hope as we reflect on everything that we have accomplished and our plans to build a safer future. We are grateful for friends and supporters who stand in solidarity to ensure that our work to end gender-based violence in Niagara continues.

We hope you enjoy reading how we're more than shelter.
Thank you for your trust and allyship.

Gratefully,



Nicole Regehr
Executive Director



Jennifer Wallace
Chair, Board of Directors



*Gillian's Place
West Niagara*

OUR SERVICE NUMBERS



10,383

CRISIS CALLS AND
TEXTS ANSWERED

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES



386

attended counselling
appointments



260

received transitional
housing support



681

obtained legal advice
and support

630

received help from our
Domestic Violence
Consultants at FACS
Niagara

107

CHILDREN
were seen by
our Child & Youth
Counsellors for
exposure to abuse

2,017

TOTAL SERVED
through our community
outreach services

12,740

**LIFE-CHANGING
SUPPORTS**

through Gillian's Place

EMERGENCY SHELTER



166

ADULTS



127

CHILDREN



293

**LIVED IN OUR
SHELTER**

Stepping Stones Program

Our Stepping Stones Program supported over 143 clients last year. This program encompasses several initiatives to connect our clients with items, resources, and services vital to moving forward, improving their safety, or increasing their independence. This program is funded through community partnerships and exemplifies how we're more than shelter.



**CHROME-
BOOKS**



**CELL
PHONES**



BANKING



**SECURITY
DEVICES**

FEMICIDE

Femicide is defined by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses as the intentional murder of women and girls because of their gender.

Femicide includes women (and at times their children) or girls that were killed by a man and/or men who are either a former or current intimate partner, a family member, someone known to them, or in some cases unknown but still targeted.

Gillian's Place serves both rural and urban communities. The rate of gender-related homicide of women and girls in Canada was more than 2.5 times greater in rural areas compared to urban areas.

Gillian's Place and others are calling upon the Government of Canada to recognize femicide as a distinct crime and

As the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability has documented, in the last **five years** there have been **850 deaths** of women and girls in Canada, or **one every 48 hours**.

Since femicide research and reporting began in **2018**, rates of femicide in Canada have increased by **24%**.

amend the criminal code or implement special legislation to respond to femicide and its prevention. This would mean officially recognizing the killings in which women and girls were targeted because of their sex, gender identity, gender expression, or perceived gender.

SAFETY PLANNING

Due to the known safety risks for our clients living in our shelter, second-stage homes, or the community, every client receives a safety plan. A safety plan is a set of actions to help lower the risk of being hurt by a current or former abusive partner.

At GP, we utilize the Jackie Campbell Danger Risk Assessment, which assesses the risk of lethality by a client's abuser. Each safety plan is created individually with the client, accounting for their unique situation, and helping to ensure their safety.

If you or someone you care about is worried for their safety, call or text our support line at 906.684.8331, 24/7.

Preparing a Safety Plan

- Make arrangements with friends or family so you can stay with them if necessary.
- Figure out your emergency exits/escape plan.
- Use caution when storing numbers on your cell phone and computer.
- Consider any financial ties you may have with your abuser and take the necessary steps to protect yourself.
- Plan your transportation.
- Develop and teach your children their own safety plan.
- Call Gillian's Place to have a tailored assessment and safety plan completed.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

Surviving to Thriving

Surviving to Thriving is an eight-week psycho-educational outreach group designed to educate caregivers and their children about abuse; mitigate risk factors; increase safety; and develop coping strategies to build resiliency.

Caregivers will learn the impact of trauma and abuse on children; how to support them emotionally; and how to enhance attachment using positive parenting skills. Sessions allow children to identify their emotions, develop healthy communication skills, and learn to cope with anger.

Topics include:

- Building rapport
- Defining abuse
- Safety planning
- Feelings/anger
- Responsibility
- Self-esteem
- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Celebration

Caregivers living with abusive partners face enormous challenges in being the best parent they can be. The caregiver/child bond is negatively impacted without proper intervention, and children may be isolated from potential sources of support. This program is providing vital support to our vulnerable mothers and children, and we believe it is helping break the cycle of abuse.

Kristi Lawrence
Director of Client Services

Over the eight weeks, all the beautiful mothers and children came out happier and more confident. The bonds became more powerful, in the process, providing the love, support and encouragement needed to overcome the challenges we all experienced, called life.

Mother
Surviving to Thriving Participant



Stay tuned for updates about our funding and development of our outreach program for 2SLGBTQQIA+ survivors.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS



Allied Agency Program

At Gillian's Place, we believe everyone should have essential, often life-saving information to create a safer and more compassionate community, freeing everyone from abuse and violence.

Our Community Education and Violence Prevention Programs offer training and information sessions to schools, community agencies, and organizations on how best to support survivors should they identify abuse or receive a disclosure of abuse.

We are very grateful to have had a very knowledgeable and experienced staff member from Gillian's Place deliver an on-site workshop on the programs and services of Gillian's Place with additional content in response to our request to also cover trauma-informed care. The facilitator did an exceptional job of engaging the students with thought-provoking discussions and a safety planning exercise for a program that trains and prepares future healthcare professionals. It is essential for our students to understand gender-based violence, risk factors for abuse, safety planning, principles of trauma-informed care, and community resources.

Dr. Kathryn Halverson

Assistant Professor, Brock University (Dept. of Nursing)

Last year, we launched the Allied Agency Program, created out of a demand for high-quality, evidence-based, and trauma-informed training from local organizations seeking education about Gillian's Place, gender-based violence, and ways to better support survivors.

In an effort to reduce barriers and increase capacity for supporting survivors, the Allied Agency Program aims to build and develop practical skills for improving our community's response to gender-based violence.

GP's Allied Agency Program provides training in the following areas, completed as separate courses or as one larger training workshop:



Youth Programs & Placements

As part of our Community Education and Violence Prevention Programs, Gillian's Place offers various Youth Engagement opportunities, including post-secondary placement students in our Shelter Counselling Department and Child and Youth Department.

Gillian's Place was awarded the Brock University Co-op Employer of the Year for our partnership and excellence in

providing comprehensive training and a collaborative learning plan that includes the student's personal and professional goals and opportunities for unique hands-on experiences.

**Interested in
Community Education?
We invite you to visit:**

gilliansplace.com/commed



COMMUNITY EVENTS

A return to “in person”

We were excited to finally return our signature events to an in-person experience. We certainly missed the smiles and support from our caring community. It was a year we will never forget, seeing hundreds of community allies show up again and support our work to end gender-based violence in Niagara.

Walk a Mile in HER Shoes

After two years of adapted virtual Walk a Mile events and engaging our community, we decided to return in person to a men's march to end violence against women, Walk a Mile in HER Shoes.

We felt it important to return to a men's march because it is an opportunity for male-identifying allies to put in the work to end men's violence against women. Historically, it has been women and other equity-deserving communities working to end the violence perpetrated against them. Walk a Mile in HER Shoes and its participants recognize that men and those who identify as male have more power relative to women in society, which places them in a position to advance gender initiatives.

We asked participants to read and sign a Men's Pledge to highlight their commitment to male allyship. By supporting Walk a Mile in HER Shoes, participants create a safe and positive space that supports women, children, and all gender- and sexually-diverse folks experiencing gender-based violence.



Walk a Mile in HER Shoes directly benefits men and male-identifying allies by:

- Changing rigid gender perceptions
- Broadening gender expectations and norms
 - Advancing self-care for men
 - Transforming unhealthy masculinities
- Promoting male allyship and healthy relationships



On Saturday, October 15th, over 150 male-identifying allies and 34 teams showed up to the Pen Centre and marched to end violence against women. The return of Walk a Mile in HER Shoes, presented by PenFinancial Credit Union, raised over \$120,000 for Gillian's Place. We are incredibly thankful to our sponsors, ambassadors, walkers, volunteers, and donors who help make a Walk a Mile impact every October!

Wrapped In Courage Celebrates Ten Years

Not only did we celebrate the return of our Pancake Breakfast to start Woman Abuse Prevention Month, but we also celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Wrapped in Courage Campaign: a Provincial Campaign to raise awareness about gender-based violence and stand in solidarity with survivors. Over 200 people attended Market Square to support Gillian's Place and survivors of gender-based violence. We proudly raised flags in our official catchment areas as part of the Wrapped in Courage Campaign.



Breakfast To End Gender-Based Violence

With great excitement, we hosted our Breakfast to End Gender-based Violence for the first time since March 2018! Over 210 community members attended to learn more about our work, our vision for the future, and the role of community support at Gillian's Place. Our generous and like-minded friends at Alexandria Professional provided a \$10,000 gift-matching opportunity this year. Leveraging this, attendees to the breakfast helped raise over \$50,000 in one-time, monthly, and annual charitable gifts. We are so grateful to those who attended and those who donated to help ensure our community is stronger and safer.

Lina Kennedy, President of Alexandria Professional presents GP's Board Chair, Jennifer Wallace with a \$10,000 sponsorship for our Breakfast.



COMMUNITY-HOSTED EVENTS



COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE

Ironwood Cider House

For Women's History Month, Ironwood Cider House held a fun and unique Cocktails for a Cause fundraiser. They hosted a silent auction and cocktail competition where over \$2,000 was donated to GP!

Cocktail makers across Niagara were challenged to make concoctions with items provided that created a great night of laughter, live music, and creativity, all while supporting Gillian's Place.



CHRISTMAS ON THE TERRACE

Rita Carrey

In a neighbourhood-filled collaboration, Rita and the Heathcote Terrace community held a "Christmas on the Terrace" fundraiser to support Gillian's Place. They raised over \$4,000 and collected toys and non-perishable food items.

The evening of festivities included warm drinks, raffle prizes, games, and a local deejay playing holiday music. The St. Catharines Fire Department also attended with a fire truck for children to explore!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Jessica Cavezza of Desjardins Insurance Agents

We thank Jessica Cavezza of Desjardins Insurance Agents who donated backpacks to every child at Gillian's Place. They were filled with water bottles, notebooks, pencil crayons, agendas, and so much more!

The return to school season is often filled with excitement for many, but it can present additional challenges for youngsters who have experienced violence and abuse. Thanks to our thoughtful and caring community, we ensured that those we serve had everything they needed for a successful school year.



Interested in making an impact?
We invite you to visit:

gilliansplace.com/hostanevent



MONTHLY ALLY

We are excited to shine a light on a wonderful and talented monthly ally this year: Kaitlyn Daw of Kaitlyn Daw Photography. Kaitlyn's support grew from volunteering her professional photography services at Walk a Mile to becoming a generous monthly supporter this past year.

Everyone deserves a life free from abuse and violence. The services, education, and prevention programs that Gillian's Place offers are nothing short of life changing for vulnerable members of our community. I'm proud to support an organization that not only responds to the urgent demands related to gender-based violence with compassion, but also dedicates resources to prevention and advocacy efforts to help address the root of these issues.

Kaitlyne Daw

Professional Photographer and Monthly Supporter

KAITLYN DAW
photography



**Learn how you can
make your monthly
impact here:**

gilliansplace.com/monthlyally



+

**WILL
POWER**
Support a charity in your Will

Did You Know?

Leaving even a small portion of your estate to Gillian's Place could result in a more significant impact than you ever thought possible while still supporting the ones you love. Keep the love going.

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

gilliansplace.com/lifechanginglegacy



A LIFE-CHANGING LEGACY

For over four decades, many in our community have created a gift in their Will and made a life-changing legacy at Gillian's Place. When donors leave a portion of their estate to Gillian's Place, it is perhaps the biggest tribute of trust in our work and a gesture we take gratefully and seriously. I wholeheartedly say that we would not be where we are today without this level of generosity. For example, last year, we received an estate gift that helped our *Build a Safer Future Campaign* achieve 65% of its goal in just over a year.

Nicole Regehr
Executive Director



**GILLIAN'S
PLACE**

+



**BUILD A
SAFER
FUTURE**

Since the start of the pandemic, we have had to redirect over 50% of survivors, or over 1,200 individuals who turned to us for safe shelter. Not only is demand for shelter experiencing unprecedented demand, so too are our community outreach services. Since 2020, these services have responded to a 105% increase.

While we are doing everything we can to meet this demand within our current context, we know we can and must do better to provide practical, compassionate care to survivors who turn to us. The size and layout of our current St. Catharines building is no longer adequate to respond to the seemingly ever-increasing demand; nor is it conducive to achieving the compassionate client-centered and trauma-informed care that we strive to deliver.



Melissa Marotta-Paolicelli and Angela Marotta announcing the Marotta Family's 1.5 million lead gift to establish the Marotta Family Centre for Violence Prevention & Outreach Support.

After careful planning, our \$8 million Build a Safer Future Campaign will fundamentally transform the level of trauma-informed care Gillian's Place can provide to survivors and their allies for decades to come. Through renovation and expansion, we will add five more private bedrooms with ten additional shelter beds, and more areas designed to provide wrap-around more than shelter support.

**Learn more about our
Build a Safer Future Campaign at:**

gilliansplace.com/saferfutures



Our Vision



**5 new
bedrooms**



**10
shelter beds**



**Child &
youth room
enhancement**



**Group programming,
life-skills &
collaboration room**



**Staff wellness
space**



**Pet-friendly
shelter**



**Non-denominational
prayer & healing
space**



**Expanded
outreach
department**



**Security
upgrades**



**Communal
spaces**



**Revitalized
client services
spaces**



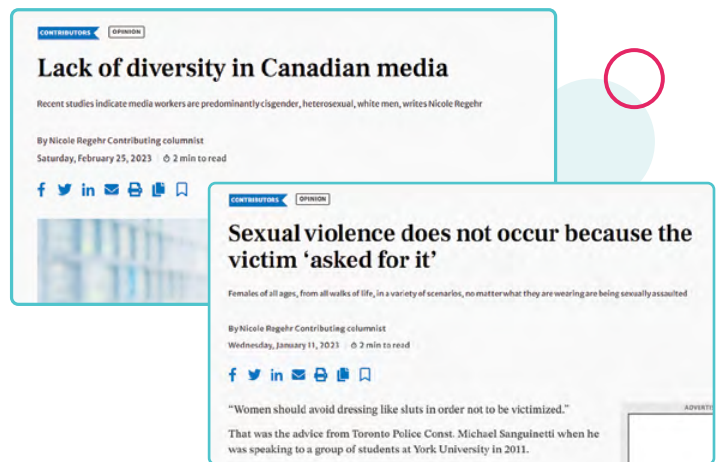
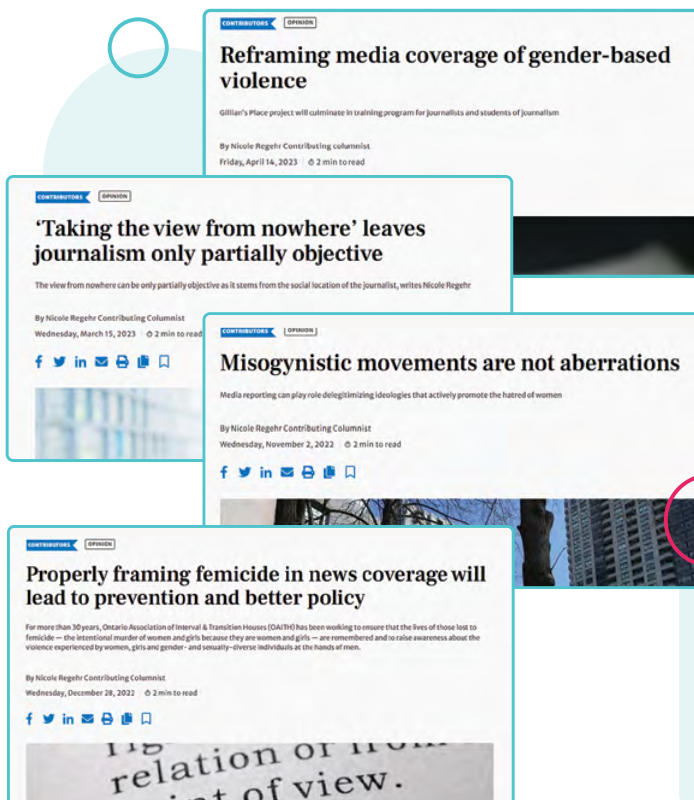
**Private &
separate
bathrooms**

RESPONSIBLE MEDIA

In the fall of 2021, Gillian's Place was awarded a 30-month grant from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to develop a training program for journalists and students of journalism to report responsibly on gender-based violence and gendered issues.

Because journalism is among the most powerful tools for social justice, the goals of our training program are: to promote gender equality and diversity in news media content; enhance news media capacity to appropriately and responsibly address gender-based violence; and increase the representation of women and gender-diverse people as experts and leaders in news media.

And it has been a productive year!



Over the last year...

- We partnered with the Niagara Dailies to publish a series of op-eds that helped us share with the community the results of our extensive literature review;
- We wrote, designed, and printed the Guide for Journalists that will complement our training program and act as a resource for journalists and students of journalism;
- We began drafting the written content for the virtual offering of our training program;
- We completed filming the documentary-style video segments of our training program.

We are finishing writing the training program, and our friends at MRP Studios are working their editing magic on our videos.

We plan to launch the training program for everyone who participated in its development and our partner community agencies early in August. The training program will fully launch to the public in early September.

To learn more about
this project, we invite
you to visit:

gilliansplace.com/responsiblemedia



STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSES

For the year ending March 31, 2023

Note: Included in revenues is \$956,811 that have been allocated to the Facilities Fund. \$324,428 in other grants and \$632,383 in donations are restricted contributions to the Build a Safer Future Capital Campaign.

Revenue	2023	2022	2021	2020	
Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services	1,976,815	1,974,935	1,973,649	1,664,294	43%
Donations and Fundraising	1,513,816	1,004,402	839,488	566,492	33%
Other Grants	901,813	415,933	420,190	104,952	20%
Investment and Other Income	(61,606)	158,211	168,817	219,791	-1%
Forgiveness of Loan	12,562	138,162	138,162	138,162	0%
Rent Subsidies	123,831	104,798	102,022	60,335	3%
United Way Program Funding	48,550	48,550	48,550	48,552	1%
Ministry of the Attorney General	47,500	36,250	32,500	32,500	1%
	4,563,281	3,881,241	3,723,378	2,835,078	100%
Expenses					
Emergency Shelter	1,691,880	1,654,480	1,627,815	1,525,320	44%
One-time Projects	659,506	593,291	557,598	33,241	17%
Transition and Legal Services	565,800	518,588	328,206	363,106	14%
Community Development	234,962	234,515	209,451	193,777	6%
Administration	192,511	188,054	201,000	171,661	5%
Domestic Violence Consultant	188,933	192,898	151,636	145,662	5%
Outreach Counselling	145,461	152,724	134,971	150,466	4%
Depreciation	122,185	122,186	122,184	124,850	3%
Family Court Support	47,829	36,250	32,500	32,500	1%
	3,849,067	3,692,986	3,365,361	2,740,583	100%
Surplus (Deficit) as per p.5 of Audited Statements	714,214	188,255	358,017	94,495	

Audited financial statements available upon request.



**GILLIAN'S
PLACE**

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

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

Gillian's Place respects human rights.

We are a place where Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, aromantic, and all gender- and sexually- diverse folks are welcomed and supported.



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