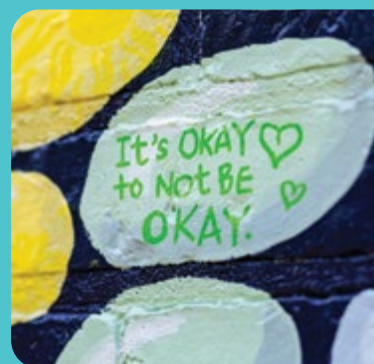






GILLIAN'S PLACE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25



LEADERSHIP TEAM

Nicole Regehr (She/Her)
Executive Director

Graeme Dargavel (He/Him)
Director of Development & Communications

Kristi Lawrence (She/Her)
Director of Client Services & Facility Operations

Rhonda Sliwa (She/Her)
Director of Finance

Linda Bowden (She/Her)
Manager of Human Resources & Administration

Jami Coughler (She/Her)
Manager of Residential Services

Zacheriah Loeb-Houston (He/Him)
Manager of Strategy & Infrastructure

Amy Stott (She/Her)
Manager of Service Quality & Crisis Response

Marion Wright (She/Her)
Manager of Legal Services

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kim Sweeney
Chair

Lelia Costantini
Vice-Chair

Jennifer Wallace
Past Chair

Vanessa Cheng
Secretary

Franca Vavaroutsos
Treasurer

Jo-Ann Boyle-Jackson
Director

Meganne Cameron
Director

Samantha Hoodless
Director

Myda Khatcherian
Director

Julie Kirkelos
Director

Melissa McCallum
Director

Jamila Motala
Director

Diana Simmons
Director

Lisa Smith
Director

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

At Gillian’s Place, we acknowledge and respect that the land on which we work is the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinabek and Haudenosaunee Peoples.

In our work to end gender-based violence, we must always remember that Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people are subjected to disproportionately high rates of violence. This violence stems from colonization, the legacy of residential schools, historic and ongoing child welfare practices, misogyny, patriarchy, and racism.



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE

As we look to the year ahead, we pause to reflect on the transformative work accomplished over the past twelve months.

We are immensely proud of the resilience that defines every part of Gillian's Place—our dedicated team, passionate volunteers, generous donors, and most of all, the brave individuals we serve. Their strength inspires us to continue our fight against gender-based violence.

This year marked a powerful culmination of our Reducing Barriers and Creating Lasting Change strategic plan. Launched in 2021, the plan has driven meaningful growth across our organization, making Gillian's Place more resilient, more responsive, and better equipped to deliver exceptional trauma-informed care.

We are proud to present our latest Annual Report, which highlights key achievements and milestones since April 2024. Among these accomplishments:

- **Service Enhancements:** In response to the rising prevalence of abuse and increasingly complex client needs, we've critically examined and strengthened service delivery, enhanced frontline training, and expanded our crisis response supports.
- **Legal Program Expansion:** Thanks to generous multi-year funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario, we've added vital resources to our Legal Program, improving access to justice for survivors.
- **Policy Impact:** Our advocacy following the declaration of intimate partner violence as an epidemic led to gender-based violence being included as a priority in Niagara Region's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

This year also marked a major milestone in our capital expansion. After more than two years of construction, **Phase One of our shelter renovation is complete.** This transformation includes:

- Private bathrooms for every resident
- New spaces for community education, group programs, and life skills training
- A peaceful, non-denominational prayer and meditation room
- Wellness and healing spaces for movement and exercise
- Enhanced security systems
- Expanded and intentionally designed spaces for children and youth
- Revitalized counselling and client service areas

And we're just getting started.

Phase Two will see the construction of an 8,000-square-foot, three-storey addition—the Marotta Family Centre for Violence Prevention & Outreach Support. When completed, this \$10 million+ project will position Gillian's Place as a regional hub for healing, education, and long-term support for decades to come.

Looking forward, we are excited to introduce our new strategic plan: Stronger Together. Building on the momentum and insights of the past three years, this plan sets our direction through 2028, focused on strengthening our core and creating a safer future for all. The following pages outline the key pillars of this work.

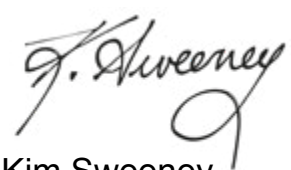
As always, we could not do this without the unwavering support of our community. To everyone who shares our mission, thank you. You make this work possible.

We are more resilient, together.

Sincerely,



Nicole Regehr
Executive Director



Kim Sweeney
Chair, Board of Directors

STRONGER TOGETHER STRATEGIC PLAN

Strengthening Our Core for a Safer Future

Strategic Directions

Optimize the Use of Gillian's Place Facilities to Ensure Exceptional Service Delivery

GOAL:

Intentionally plan for the use of Gillian's Place facilities to ensure optimal outcomes and impact for all stakeholders.

Enhance Service Presence and Impact in Underserved Niagara Communities

GOAL:

Identify and address critical service barriers experienced by underserved populations.

Strengthen Human Resource Capacity to Meet Emerging Community Needs

GOAL:

Continue to build an empowered, skilled, and supported HR team that delivers exceptional client services.

Foster a Culture of Governance Excellence

GOAL:

Enhance the governance framework to ensure optimal Board structure, process, and impact.

Develop Strategies for Long-Term Resource Sustainability

GOAL:

Continue to build sustainable revenue that aligns with organizational goals and plans for strategic growth.

CRISIS RESPONSE SERVICES

EMERGENCY SHELTER



138
ADULTS



108
CHILDREN

Residents found safety, stability, and support in our shelter during their most critical time of need.



246
lives protected
under our roof

SAFETY PLANNING



2,181
INDIVIDUAL
PLANS CREATED

Survivors received tailored support to stay safe, navigate risk, and plan for a life free from violence.

24/7 SUPPORT LINE



3,666
CALLS & TEXTS
ANSWERED

Offering immediate support, safety planning, and hope around the clock.

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE INITIATIVE

Over **1,258** children were positively impacted through early intervention and safety measures.



642 FAMILIES
RECEIVED HELP FROM
OUR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
CONSULTANTS AT
FACS NIAGARA

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

LEGAL SUPPORT



673
INDIVIDUALS
EMPOWERED
WITH LEGAL ADVICE

Survivors gained clarity and confidence navigating complex legal systems from family court to protection orders.

COUNSELLING



458
COUNSELLING
SESSIONS
DELIVERED

Survivors received trauma-informed and healing-centred care to support emotional recovery and resilience.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING & SUPPORT



350
SUPPORTED
THROUGH LIFE
BEYOND SHELTER

Our team walked alongside survivors as they rebuilt their lives, found housing, and regained independence.

CHILD & YOUTH SUPPORT

95 children
WERE SUPPORTED
IN HEALING
FROM ABUSE

Our youngest clients were given a safe space to express, process, and begin to heal from the trauma they experienced.

SUPPORTED SECOND-STAGE HOUSING

17 women & 20 children

FOUND STABILITY, SUPPORT, AND COMMUNITY
IN OUR SECOND-STAGE HOMES

Across North and West Niagara, survivors took courageous steps toward independence and a violence-free future.

LEIDA'S STORY

Building Resilience, One Step at a Time

When Leida arrived at Gillian's Place, she felt frightened but ready to take the first step toward building a new life.

She had just fled from her abusive partner and was searching for a safe place to start over with her two children. Her infant daughter was recovering from a serious medical condition that required constant care, and Leida knew that continuing to live in an environment filled with violence and fear would put her daughter's fragile health at even greater risk.

Leida had come to Canada from Cambodia as a refugee, leaving behind her whole life in hopes of building a better future. But instead, she found herself in a relationship filled with fear and control. Her partner often told her that if she left, she'd be deported and lose everything, including her children. For a long time, she believed him. But one day, Leida decided her children deserved more. A teacher at her son's school noticed changes in his behaviour, signs that something wasn't right. After speaking with Leida, the teacher talked to her about Gillian's Place. That's when everything began to change.

Leida's journey wasn't easy. She faced a lot of challenges, including a hospital stay for her mental health due to her abuser's ongoing control and manipulation, even after she left. Her stay in the shelter lasted longer than most, reflecting just how many barriers she had to overcome—but through it all, Leida kept going.

With help from her counsellor at GP and a warm referral from our Legal Program to an immigration specialist, Leida was able to apply for permanent residency. That opened the door to things she hadn't had before, including housing support and a work permit. She began looking for a place to live and continued attending counselling sessions to improve her confidence and coping skills.

Leida found an apartment for her and her children. She was so proud. Our team helped furnish her new home and provided security items through our Stepping Stones program, like a doorbell camera and window alarms, to help them feel safe.

Leida is now part of our Aftercare and Outreach programs and continues to stay connected. She still visits the shelter from time to time, and it was right here in our hallway that her little girl took her very first steps.

When Leida talks about her time at Gillian's Place, she says, "It was the first place I ever felt truly safe. It wasn't just a shelter, it was my home when I had none." And for us, that means everything.

Leida is one of many women who had a safe place to land and the support she needed to begin again. Her resilience, like so many others, is incredibly inspiring.



UNIQUELY YOU

Healing from Trauma for All Identities

A workshop series to empower gender- and sexually-diverse individuals who have experienced gender-based violence

Gillian's Place is presently the only organization in Niagara providing shelter and specialized support to gender- and sexually-diverse survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

Sadly, violence and abuse impact 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals at disproportionately higher rates, and they experience unique challenges in accessing appropriate safety and support services.

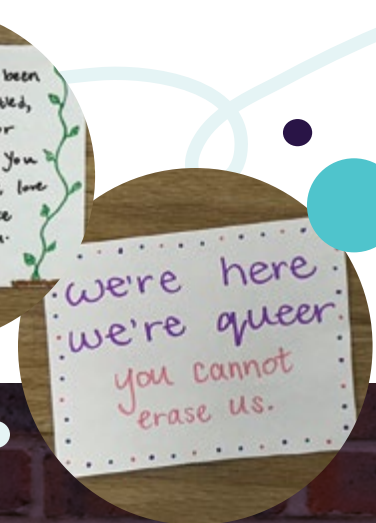
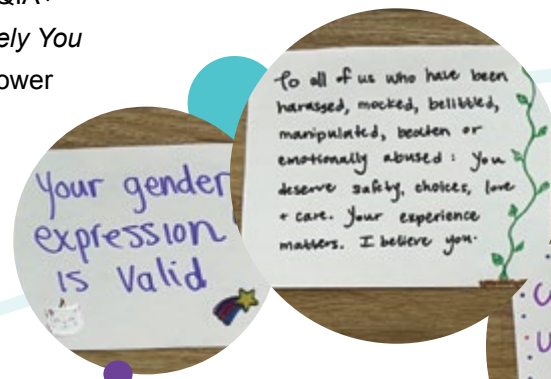
At Gillian's Place, we are committed to continuously learning and growing in our understanding of how to provide safe, inclusive, and welcoming services and spaces. Over the past two years, we have been designing a new outreach program, addressing the need for a tailored, trauma-informed series to support 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors. We were excited to officially launch *Uniquely You* last fall—a milestone in our continued efforts to empower and advocate for marginalized folks facing abuse.

Being gender diverse has really complicated my escape from domestic violence. *Uniquely You* gave me so much knowledge that really fit with my experience. Being trans didn't prevent my experience with domestic violence and most folks don't know of the resources available to seek support. Uniquely You was a much-needed jolt of empowerment when I needed it most.

Uniquely You Participant

SIX-WEEK WORKSHOP SERIES

- Preventing and Identifying GBV
- Safety Planning and POD Mapping
- Seeking Safer Supports and Services
- Keeping Each Other Safe
- Exploring Healing After GBV
- Beyond Trauma: Reclaiming Our Stories



Wisdom2Action Training

Our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Committee collaborated with Wisdom2Action to host an agency-wide training day. Our team was engaged and eager to improve anti-oppression strategies, to deepen their understanding and knowledge of trans inclusion, and share ideas, knowledge, and concerns—all in a safe and non-judgmental environment. It was a day our team won't soon forget.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Gillian's Place offers community education and violence prevention programs that are instrumental in creating a safer and more informed community.

Through customizable workshops, training sessions, and outreach initiatives, our programs equip individuals and organizations with the tools to recognize, respond to, and prevent gender-based violence. These programs have provided education to a wide range of community partners, helping increase awareness and build capacity to support those experiencing abuse.

Learn more here:

gilliansplace.com/commed



Over **1,000 individuals** received GBV education and training last year.

Niagara Emergency Services

Gillian's Place is proud to have facilitated training to over 390 Niagara Emergency Medical Services Paramedics in the fall of 2024. The training included information on our services, how to make a referral, types of violence and abuse, and red flags and signs of abuse. It also included guidance on navigating disclosures of abuse and responding promptly and effectively. Our goal was to help Niagara Emergency Medical Services staff create a safer and more compassionate environment within the healthcare system, ensuring that everyone has access to safety and support.

This past year, Gillian's Place provided essential, in-person training to over 390 Paramedics, addressing the declared epidemic of IPV in the Niagara Region. This training significantly enhanced our Paramedics' ability to identify, respond to, and support individuals experiencing IPV, emphasizing trauma-informed care, safety planning, and survivor centered approaches. We look forward to our continued partnership and joint efforts to combat Intimate Partner Violence and support our community's most vulnerable members.

Richard Ferron

Former Chief, Niagara Emergency Medical Services

Walk
a mile in **HER** shoes

Last year, Walk a Mile in HER Shoes raised a record-breaking \$134,000!

Thank you to the 160 walkers, 27 teams, 37 sponsors, and the generous community behind over 800 donations who made this possible. Together, you've stepped up to support survivors and help end gender-based violence.



COACHING BOYS INTO MEN

To learn more about coaching boys into men, please visit:

gilliansplace.com/youthengagement



In partnership with Futures Without Violence, Interval House of Hamilton, and Birchway Niagara, Gillian's Place launched a transformative, evidence-based program designed to drive meaningful change in athletic and recreational cultures across Niagara and beyond.

Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) is designed to engage male athletes and coaches into conversations about healthy relationships, consent, mental health, and building safer and more supportive athletic and recreational cultures. This program equips coaches to effectively mentor young male athletes, consisting of twelve weekly discussions facilitated by coaches.

Last year, Gillian's Place trained nine coaches from the District School Board of Niagara and the Niagara Catholic District School Board, providing them with training to positively influence how young men think and behave both on and off the field.

Coaching Boys
INTO MEN
CoachesCorner.org



DID YOU KNOW?

Walk a Mile in HER Shoes engages hundreds of men and boys annually, increasing awareness of Gillian's Place, gender-based violence, and the root causes of violence and abuse.

Walk a Mile is an excellent opportunity to advance healthy masculinities for boys and men by challenging harmful gender norms and stereotypes, helping men explore healthier relationships and expressions of emotions, changing rigid gender norms that promote violence and abuse.



Learn more here:

walkamileinhershoes.ca



OUR COMMUNITY TAKING ACTION AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Your initiative and our community help support their new beginning.

Each year, compassionate individuals and groups take action by turning their creativity and passion into powerful support for survivors.

Last year, community-hosted events raised over \$125,000, showing that every effort, big or small, can have a collective life-changing impact.



Silversmith Brewing Company & CAA Niagara

In honour of International Women's Day, Silversmith Brewing and CAA Niagara joined forces and raised \$1,000 to support Gillian's Place. Silversmith Brewing generously donated proceeds from their limited-edition Solstice Double IPA, while CAA Niagara sold exclusive merchandise and collected donations throughout the month.



St. Catharines & District Newcomers Club

Every holiday season, the St. Catharines & District Newcomers Club hosts a festive cookie exchange. What began as a simple gathering of a few club members has grown into an annual tradition that supports survivors and families at Gillian's Place during the holidays. We're grateful for their warmth, generosity, and ongoing commitment to creating a safer Niagara.



On a Bluebird's Wing

The inaugural *On a Bluebird's Wing* benefit concert brought music, meaning, and awareness to the fight against gender-based violence. The sold-out show featured an incredible lineup of artists, including Julianna Riolino, Dorothea Paas, Spencer Burton, and Nicolette & the Nobodies. Their collaboration raised an incredible \$10,000 for GP!

Learn how you can take action against gender-based violence by visiting:
gilliansplace.com/takeaction



Or contact our Donor & Volunteer Relations Coordinator, Amanda Ross at:
905.684.4000 ext. 270 • amanda.ross@gilliansplace.com

A HOWLING THANKS TO GREAT WOLF LODGE!

Thank you for making a splash of impact!

Great Wolf Lodge made a life-changing splash of impact on domestic violence services in Niagara last year. Gillian's Place was honoured to be selected as one of the 2024 Charity Car Wash beneficiaries.

We are abundantly thankful for the wolf pack's teamwork, generosity, and dedication. A tremendous \$130,000 was donated to Gillian's Place, which was used to support the lifesaving work of our 24/7 emergency shelter.



CRAFTED FOR COMMUNITY

Our wine and beer industry partners also made an impact this year!

Gillian's Place extends our appreciation for partnering in our work to end gender-based violence.

- AMO Estate Winery
- Arterra Wines Canada
- Bench Brewing Company
- Château des Charmes
- Colaneri Estate Winery
- Creekside Estate Winery
- Featherstone Estate Winery
- Ironwood Cider House
- King's Court Estate Winery
- Mason Vineyard
- Newark Brewing Company
- Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery
- Silversmith Brewing Co.
- Tawse Winery
- The Hare Wine Company
- Two Sisters Vineyards

OUR VOLUNTEERS

In 1977, Gillian's Place was founded because of the compassionate and committed efforts of volunteers.

Over 45 years later, their legacy lives on. Today, volunteers continue to make waves of impact at Gillian's Place.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Nancy Sevier

I've been on the receiving end of support before, and now it's my turn to give back. Helping in the kitchen and with the kids is my way of paying it forward. I truly believe that what you put out into the world comes back to you. Everyone needs a leg up sometimes, and I'm just grateful to be part of a community where I can make a difference and feel that connection.

If you're interested in volunteering, please visit the following link.

gilliansplace.com/getinvolved



Or contact our Donor & Volunteer Relations Coordinator, Amanda Ross at:

905.684.4000 ext. 270 • amanda.ross@gilliansplace.com

MONTHLY ALLIES

Monthly momentum, a lifeline of stability.

At Gillian's Place, consistent and compassionate support fuels our ability to provide 24/7 trauma-informed support to survivors of gender-based violence. Our community of Monthly Allies are more than generous—they are essential.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 115 monthly donors collectively contributed over \$70,000 to Gillian's Place last year. Their ongoing commitment provides a lifeline of stability, ensuring we can respond quickly and effectively when survivors need us most.



MONTHLY ALLY SPOTLIGHT

Meet Jessica Otting

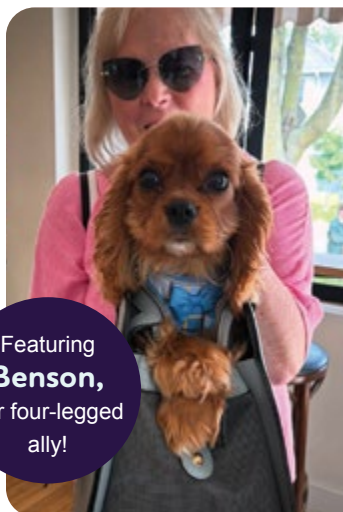
Winemaker, Tawse & Redstone Wineries

Gillian's Place isn't just a shelter, they're a lifeline in our community that offers safety, privacy, and long-term support that truly changes lives for women and kids. They're there 24/7 for women and LGBTQ2S+ people when it matters most, and they rely on our donations all year, not just at the holidays. Supporting them monthly in any amount means helping families rebuild, with dignity, for the long term.

LIFE-CHANGING LEGACIES

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of our friends and supporters have trusted Gillian's Place with a gift in their Will. Many people think they have to choose between the causes and the people they care about. The reality is you don't have to choose. Beyond your Will, there are many different giving tools that can help maximize benefits to your heirs, while changing and saving lives at Gillian's Place.



Featuring
Benson,
our four-legged
ally!

Diane's Life-Changing Legacy

As a survivor of domestic violence, it is of the utmost importance that we build support systems and safe environments for victims and their families where they can regain their dignity and self-esteem, while living in a safe and nurturing environment to try and rebuild their lives. Gillian's Place provides this as well as the tools to move towards the future and become self-sufficient in a non-violent environment. In the world we live in today, it is very important to think ahead so that the future of the organization is solid, because violence, unfortunately, is ever present in the world we live in. This is why I choose to support Gillian's Place not only through my monthly giving, but also by leaving a gift in my will.

Have you already included Gillian's Place in your plans?

Sharing is caring!

Please share with us, your family, and others. We are often unaware that our supporters have entrusted Gillian's Place with a planned gift. Letting us know your intentions can create an even bigger impact for everyone involved!

Want to learn more? Let's have coffee and connect!

Our Director of Development & Communications, Graeme Dargavel, welcomes the opportunity to share more about the impact of legacy giving.

Please connect directly at:

graeme@gilliansplace.com

or 905.684.4000 ext. 254

Or visit: gilliansplace.com/lifechanginglegacy



Memorial & Tribute Gifts

Last year, Gillian's Place received gifts in memory of the following individuals...

Robert Anderson

Calogera Giudice

Rose Pauline Kubik

Josie Parisee

Gisele Scandrett

Anne Godfrey Agnew

Alma Mary Jack

Thomas Lewis

Ruth Petryna

Rosa Wilton

Rita Carrey

Lisa Johnstone

Michael Manley-Casimir

Dana Price

Joseph Di Carmine

Linda Joyce Curtis

Don McMaster

Lucie Schucker



**GILLIAN'S
PLACE**

+



**BUILD A
SAFER
FUTURE**



Our project isn't just about bricks and mortar—it is about dignity, healing, and hope. When completed, we will serve more people more effectively and compassionately.

The Marotta Family Centre for Violence Prevention & Outreach Support will:

- Expand our Outreach Counselling, Legal, Transitional Housing, and Domestic Violence Response programs
- Create a dedicated space for our Violence Prevention and Education team
- Add allergen-friendly bedrooms so we can finally become a pet-friendly shelter, because no one should ever have to choose between safety and their beloved pet
- Welcome survivors and supporters into a bright, new reception area and a spacious community meeting room

When it becomes a reality, Gillian's Place will have 11 more shelter beds, expanded survivor programming, and a true community hub for healing and support.

Our shelter was full. Our crisis lines were ringing off the hook. Our programs were stretched to capacity. And yet—we knew we had to do more. The truth is that our building simply couldn't keep up with the growing needs of our community. We needed more space to provide the compassionate, effective, and dignified care every survivor deserves. Our official groundbreaking was an incredible day of celebration, progress, and, most importantly, hope.

Nicole Regher
Executive Director

Learn more about how you can help build a safer future at:

gilliansplace.com/safer-futures



STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSES

For the year ending March 31, 2025

Revenue	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services	1,867,592	1,963,206	2,024,315	2,011,185	2,006,149
Donations and Fundraising	1,426,991	1,995,343	881,433	1,004,402	839,488
Other Grants	394,509	510,663	577,385	415,933	420,190
Investment and Other Income	305,865	321,932	(61,606)	158,211	168,817
Forgiveness of Loan	12,562	12,562	12,562	138,162	138,162
Rent Subsidies	140,899	127,277	123,831	104,798	102,022
United Way Program Funding	48,550	63,550	48,550	48,550	48,550
Subtotal	4,196,968	4,994,533	3,606,470	3,881,241	3,723,378
Capital Contributions	1,332,986	2,598,471	956,811	—	—
Total Revenue	5,529,954	7,593,004	4,563,281	3,881,241	3,723,378
Expenses	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Emergency Shelter	2,088,457	1,808,189	1,691,880	1,654,480	1,627,815
One-time Projects	141,818	446,355	659,506	593,291	557,598
Transition and Legal Services	621,095	619,238	565,800	518,588	328,206
Community Development	258,474	236,879	234,962	234,515	209,451
Administration	272,013	217,478	192,511	188,054	201,000
Domestic Violence Consultant	190,754	166,944	188,933	192,898	151,636
Outreach Counselling	178,572	157,581	145,461	152,724	134,971
Depreciation	130,144	122,185	122,185	122,186	122,184
Family Court Support	100,033	50,929	47,829	36,250	32,500
Total Expenses	3,981,360	3,825,778	3,849,067	3,692,986	3,365,361

Audited financial statements available upon request.



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

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.



24/7 Phone/Text Support Line:
905.684.8331

Business Line: 905.684.4000

Mailing Address: PO Box 1387
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7J8

🖱️ gilliansplace.com