

A close-up photograph of a woman and a young girl. The woman, on the left, has dark hair and is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. The girl, on the right, has dark hair and is also smiling, leaning her head against the woman's shoulder. They are both wearing white t-shirts. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with light-colored curtains.

North York  
Women's Shelter

# 2018-2019 Annual Report



## Dear NYWS Family,

This year represents North York Women's Shelter's 35th anniversary. Thank you so much for helping us get to this incredible milestone! Our history as one of Toronto's oldest VAW shelters, and the only shelter in North York, has been one of incredible determination to put an end to violence against women and their children. None of what we have done over the last 35 years and what you are about to read over the following pages could have been possible without your incredible support. We are so thrilled and honoured to be writing to you in 2019, reflecting on the tremendous milestones accomplished at NYWS over our history and over the last year.

**As you know, NYWS is in the middle of a historic, paradigm-shifting rebuild that we like to call HER Build.** Growing from our original 3,000 sq ft shelter to our 24,000 sq ft state of the art, accessible, trauma-informed shelter and anti-violence community services hub has challenged and ignited our staff, our board, our build team and you, our community in unprecedented ways. Together, united by the unwavering determination to stand up to violence against women, we have created the vision for a VAW institution like no other in the country. As we sit down to write this



in the late spring of 2019, we can't help but marvel how close we are to the construction finish line. As drywall goes up inside and brick gets laid on the outside, the dream we have all been working on so passionately since 2016 is truly being realized.

**Our wonderful programming team has been busy at work preparing for our reopening.** While creating strong, critical partnerships in the community for our shelter and our community services hub and developing an evidence-based trauma-informed framework for the entire agency they have also continued to support women and children impacted by violence through our Expressive Arts and Mental Health programs. You will see some exciting highlights and milestones for programming later on in this report.

**2019 is a both a year of great triumph as well as one of some serious challenges.** Substantial funding cuts across the Province of Ontario in areas such as legal aid, child benefits, Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and health care has meant even greater hardship and precarity for many of the women and children we serve. We are deeply concerned by these cuts and continue to advocate for the needs of women, who are made more vulnerable to being forced to stay in violent situations when social services are cut, and who also tend to need social services such as OW, ODSP, legal supports, and child benefits for their survival when attempting to make a new life free from violence. As anti-violence activists we have our work cut out for us as we both push alongside other social service agencies to reverse these cuts and also look for creative ways to address their deep impact on the women and children we support. Together alongside our entire NYWS family, we remain determined and resilient, drawing on our networks and establishing short, medium and long term programs to ensure that women do not fall through the cracks. Today, more than ever, we depend greatly on the financial support of our community. As you will read your contributions to our vital capital campaign - the HER Campaign - has made much of this work possible.

As we approach the summer months and the last few months of our build, we reflect on all that we've done as a movement, an organization, a community, alongside survivors, supporters, allies and workers. **We would like to thank everyone who has continued to make ending violence against women a priority, whether it's by sharing stories on social media, having conversations around the family dinner table about healthy relationships and consent, supporting your local women's shelter through donations, volunteering time, or simply non-judgmentally supporting a friend if she discloses that she is experiencing violence at home.**

Thank you again,



**Michele Robitaille**  
Board Chair



**Mohini Datta-Ray**  
Executive Director



## Staff

### **Rose Bright**

Mental Health & Trauma  
Counsellor

### **Vanessa Costa**

Finance Manager

### **Crystal Daniel**

Capital Campaign Manager

### **Mohini Datta-Ray**

Executive Director

### **Taylah Harris-Mungo**

Community Engagement  
Supervisor  
(to March 2019)

### **Michelle Johnson**

Manager of Development &  
Communications

### **Melissa Galeano**

Executive Assistant

### **Victoria Mata**

Expressive Arts Counsellor

### **Neila Poscente**

Capital Campaign Director

### **Vicky Sage**

Program Manager

### **Isha Saini**

Mental Health & Trauma  
Counsellor  
(to May 2019)

### **Averille Somasunderam**

Administrator



## Board of Directors



### **Michele Robitaille**

Chair  
September 2013–Present

### **Betty Soares**

Director  
October 2017–Present ON LEAVE

### **Sondra Wiseman**

Vice Chair  
October 2015–Present

### **Caroline Sand**

Director  
February 2018–Present

### **Vidula Shetye**

Treasurer  
March 2015–Present

### **Andrea Nalytzy**

Director  
October 2018–Present

### **Sayran Sulevani**

Secretary  
February 2016–Present ON LEAVE

### **Yasmin Ali**

Director  
November 2015–June 2018

### **Chenthoori Malankov**

Director  
September 2017–Present

### **Mohini Datta-Ray**

Ex-Officio  
November 2015–Present  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Your Impact by the Numbers

Thanks to your generous support, over 97 women and children were able to access programs and services at North York Women's Shelter.



**11**

Therapeutic  
Groups



**34**

Individuals  
Accessing  
Counselling



**69**

Women Receiving  
Individualized  
Support



**15**

Children Receiving  
Individualized  
Support



**46**

Referrals



**12**

Walk-ins





## Programming and Community Engagement

As the construction of our new, state of the art shelter and anti-violence centre continues, our programming continues to grow. The programming team continues to deliver mental health trauma counselling, expressive arts therapy, and provide transitional support to women and children in the community. We are also working hard behind the scenes to foster new partnerships and develop new evidence-based programs and policies for when the shelter re-opens.

Since starting in July 2018, our **Mental Health and Trauma Counselling** program has taken deep hold in our community. As research shows – and from our own experience – we know that talk therapy is not accessible to everybody, nor is there a one size fits all approach for all service users. Our trauma counsellor has an in-depth understanding of the ways violence, trauma, and structural violence such as racism, poverty, isolation etc. impact women's lives and their mental health. This program has been extremely successful in adapting to women's needs and offering a unique service that rejects the standardized approach to restrictive access to therapy.

**The Expressive Arts Therapy program (EA)** at North York Women's Shelter is a trauma informed and client-focused process. The intermodal approach to a creative process that is low skill and high sensitivity is the foundation to support our clients in their personal

journeys overcoming a variety of challenges; whether they be psychological, emotional, behavioral, or associated with life traumas, relationships or transitions. EA includes expressions such as music, theater, poetry, dance, writing, drawing or other artistic form that uses the individual's innate creativity. This year we have facilitated groups with multiple community agencies, including a medicinal garden program, mothers and tots summer group and several mind/body healing groups.

**Almost all of the women and children who access services at NYWS are navigating various challenges and systems, including legal, housing, and immigration.** This year, we have partnered with several agencies across the GTA to ensure we can offer warm referrals and access additional resources to support our clients. At every point in their journey we are there to support them by providing client-centered Transitional Support. This support is maintained throughout the year and includes everything from helping families to put food on the table, to navigating complex legal issues, such as deportation.



## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

### Trauma Informed Framework

**As an organization that serves a population where trauma is extremely prevalent NYWS is committed to trauma informed service delivery.** We have been developing a trauma-informed framework designed to ensure all areas of the organization, from programming to governance, incorporate our core trauma informed principles. Components of this framework include ongoing staff training, trauma informed policies, and implementation of a harm reduction model of service delivery.

### Pets

**NYWS is thrilled to be one of 3 VAW shelters in Ontario that will be pet friendly.** A great deal of evidence has shown that pets can be provide support, comfort and stability to families who have experienced violence. NYWS is committed to offering women with pets a safe haven for them and their animals. By offering this service we are able to reduce a significant barrier to many women who would otherwise remain in an unsafe home in order to protect their four-legged family member.

**Through an ongoing consultation with other shelters doing similar work and our own experiences we have designed an adaptable program that is designed to meet the needs of families with and without pets.** In order to meet our core principle of being trauma informed these guidelines are intended to create structure not, exert power and control. Through cooperation, mutual respect and community building, families with and without pts can experience a healing communal living experience predicated on collective principles and understanding.

### Food and Nutrition Services

Food is integral part of people's traditions and cultures and can be a great source of community. Food insecurity, which is being faced by most women leaving violence, can leave them vulnerable,

disempowered and isolated. **At NYWS, we are developing a food services model that goes beyond offering basic meals to women in shelter.** Our meal program decentralizes the colonial, Euro-centric foods that are commonly offered and work collaboratively with women to offer food that is culturally specific. It encourages communal cooking, sharing of cultural traditions and a space where women can eat together. Through on-site programming and partnerships with community agencies and businesses we are addressing food security issues by offering increased access to nutritious food and participant driven educational programs. As women transition back into the community these access points for food and the skills they have built will support their increased capacity to navigate a complex and oppressive food system.



# North York Women's Shelter **HER**campaign

*building a place of  
healing, empowerment and refuge together*

North York Women's Shelter is in the midst of the most ambitious fundraising initiative in our history and we've been humbled by the enthusiastic support we've received so far. With almost \$1.6M in philanthropic gifts confirmed, a robust pipeline of qualified prospects and the continued generosity of our community, we are well on our way to achieving our \$3M goal by the time we open the doors to our new anti-violence centre.

## Thank you to all our wonderful supporters

### **\$1 million to be raised in honour of Anne Marie D'Amico**

The entire NYWS family was deeply moved and honoured when the D'Amico family (pictured top right) and the Anne Marie D'Amico Foundation chose the HER Campaign to be their partner and beneficiary. By committing to raise \$1 million to support our new, anti-violence centre, they will create a powerful legacy in Anne Marie's name to help hundreds of women and children impacted by violence and help put an end to gender-based violence itself.



### **\$40,000 gift funds the GTA's first on-site pet facilities in a women's shelter**

Thanks to the generosity of PetSmart Charities of Canada, the new NYWS will have housing rooms for dogs and cats, an outdoor dog run, a dedicated room for feeding and grooming and a lounge where pets and their owners can enjoy each other's company.

### **44% of women say they delayed leaving abusive partners because of their pets.**

For years, we've witnessed our clients struggling with the difficult decision of leaving a beloved pet and we're committed to ensuring that having a pet is never a reason to stay in an abusive relationship or home. Our new pet facilities will enable women experiencing violence to seek a safe refuge for themselves, their children and their pets—so that no one is left behind.





### **\$20,000 gift, biggest in Club history, will fund accessible family bedroom**

The Rotary Club of North York visited our construction site to see the large family bedroom their generosity will help build, finish and furnish.

To see more photos and stories about our wonderful campaign donors, visit our website [www.nyws.ca](http://www.nyws.ca)

### **Celebrating our generous supporters**

Gifts \$1,000+ will be recognized with a listing on our new donor wall to be installed in the lobby of the community services building in 2020.

Gifts \$5,000+ will be recognized with personalized donor recognition signs to be installed either in the residence, community services building or outdoor living area of our new anti-violence centre.

### **Every gift makes a difference!**

To learn more about how your gift to the HER campaign can make an impact or to book your own hard-hat tour of our construction site, contact:

Crystal Daniel, Campaign Manager [crystal@nyws.ca](mailto:crystal@nyws.ca)





## HER Build Update

A housing crisis, along with relentless cuts to social service budgets and a persistently high rate of violence against women and girls has meant that, **as a sector, we are consistently operating over capacity**; trying to fill as many gaps as we can, despite ever-shrinking resources. Violence Against Women (VAW) Shelters throughout Toronto are at their operational breaking point. We know that women living in abusive situations who fall through the cracks can, tragically, spell a death sentence. As women stay longer and longer in shelters, less women are able to access shelters when they need them desperately.

In October 2016, when we were first invited to apply for a joint Federal-Provincial initiative to rebuild some of Canada's oldest violence against women shelters (VAW), **we could not imagine that we would be here today**. Knowing that we had a single opportunity to get this right for the thousands of women and children that we serve, we did what we knew we had to. Through ongoing consultation with survivors and community partners, we have been lead down paths that continue to keep us thinking outside the box, defying traditional notions of what shelters could or should do and has us dreaming of the possibilities of better, brighter futures for the shelter and the women and children we serve.





**In November 2018, we held a land acknowledgement and blessing event by long-time feminist activist and Elder, Wanda Whitebird,** where a large crowd assembled to give thanks to the land that nurtures us and set us up with the good intentions to support women at their most vulnerable.

Over the past year we've learned so much about construction! Construction of the new shelter began in the Spring of 2018 and has continued at a rapid pace despite maddening weather delays, a change in Provincial Government, one of the tightest construction sites imaginable and our tiny staff team. We've had challenges like finding elevated zinc in our water, forcing us to haul water offsite in

trucks for months; and triumphs like the gorgeous, thoughtful design contributions by Sheridan College students and the amazing community support we've received through our HER Capital Campaign. **The beauty in the design of the new space becomes more apparent every day and our excitement rises with it.**

**Now here we are, in the Spring of 2019, writing a "build update" for the last time** before we move back into the building later this year, furnish our new 24,000 sq. ft home, set up the health clinic with our partner Black Creek Community Health Centre, bring back our fiercely dedicated staff and welcome women and children into safety with open arms.





## Our Supporters

With the generous support of our funders, donors, and community partners we are able to continue providing life-saving services and life-changing programs to women and children in our community.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our funders and the many individuals, foundations, corporate partners and agencies who provided tremendous support in 2018. We are incredibly grateful!

### Major Funding Partners

Ministry of Community and Social Services

United Way

### HER Build Partners

Government of Canada

Government of Ontario

City of Toronto

### \$50,000+

Enbridge Inc.

### \$30,000+

PetSmart Charities of Canada

### \$20,000+

Guardian Capital Group Limited

Rotary Club of North York

### \$10,000+

James Rutley Grand Memorial Fund

John and Christine Currie Foundation

Nick and Lorraine Grella

Ontario REALTORS Care Foundation

Royal LePage Shelter Foundation





## **\$5,000+**

Anonymous  
CIBC  
Home Trust  
Katy Waugh & Rod Davidge  
Manulife Bank  
Michelle Johnson & Erik Betlem

Mohini Datta Ray  
Sayran Sulevani  
Sondra Wiseman  
The Ben and Hilda Katz  
Charitable Foundation

## **\$1,000+**

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Association Of Registered  
Graphic Designers (RGD) Design  
Thinkers Conference  
Barbara Saipe  
Betty Soares  
Crystal Daniel  
Don Fraser  
Elementary Teachers'  
Federation of Ontario  
J.S. Cheng & Partners Inc  
Joan Workman  
John & Olive Carey  
Karen Rosen  
Laura Charlton  
M. Dean Richards  
Marlene Hurlburt  
Mevotech LP

P. Virginia Holmes  
Rand Kildare Charitable  
Foundation  
Randy Josephs  
Shoppers Drug Mart Life  
Foundation  
Stam Fountoulakis  
Strategic Charitable  
Giving Foundation  
The Marla & Larry  
Wasser Family Fund  
Valu-Mart on  
Bayview  
Vincenta Cheng  
Wilkinson  
Family Fund

## **Volunteers**

**Every year, hundreds of hours are logged by our team of dedicated volunteers.** In 2018 a group of 37 volunteers spent over 1200 hours supporting programs, helping with administrative work, and assisting with events and outreach.

Thank you to all of the generous volunteers who help change lives through their actions. We would not be able to do this work without you!



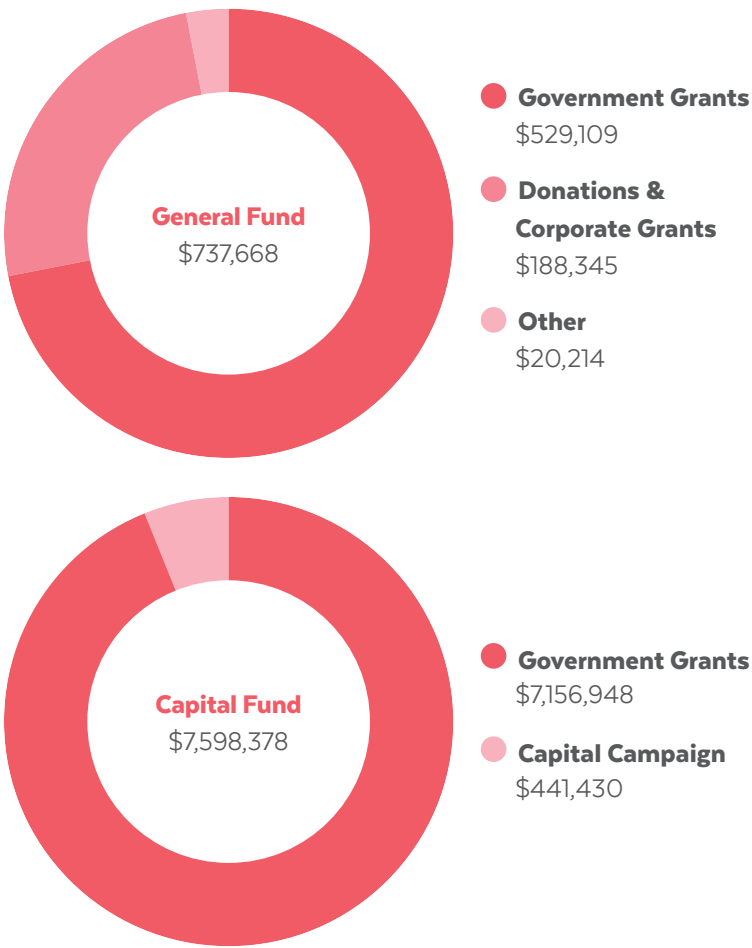
# 2018-2019 Financial Overview

In the fiscal year 2018-19, in accordance with the Canadian accounting standards for non-for-profit organizations, we've switch to the fund accounting method.

Revenues and expenses are reported according to the fund to which they relate. Our surplus is a result of the investments in the HER Build. These funds are used to complete the construction project.

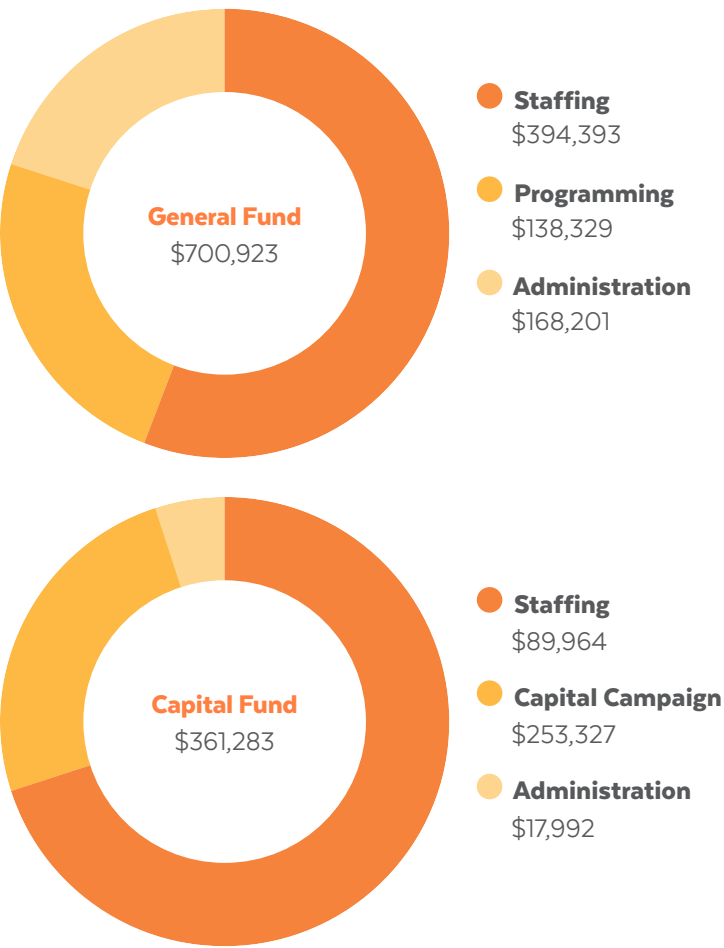
## Total Revenues

\$8,336,046



## Expenses

\$1,050,588







**North York  
Women's Shelter**

**nyws.ca**

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