

Making the Impossible Possible



ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024



SAFETY. POWER. SISTERHOOD.

nyws

November 2024



What's Inside:

- 1** Land Acknowledgement
- 3** Our Mission, Vision and Values
- 4** A Message from our Executive Director & Board Chair
- 6** Board of Directors & Senior Management Team
- 7** A Year in Review: Building Stability
- 10** NYWS By the Numbers
- 13** Thank you

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We Acknowledge


Let us acknowledge what it means for us to be on this land. We are gathered in Tkaronto, now known as Toronto, which in Mohawk means “where there are trees standing in the water”. Today, Tkaronto is covered under Treaty #13 and the Williams Treaties. It is the traditional territories of many First Peoples, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples.

As we gather here today, these nations continue to experience ongoing colonization and displacement - where land acknowledgements are offered in place of land itself.

Indigenous peoples have been in mutual relationship with this land and have been stewarding it for a long time - long before any settler arrived on Turtle Island or Canada. Indigenous people made treaties with settlers, including the Dish With One Spoon Wampum and Two Row Wampum Treaties, both of which implied shared land and separate governance by Indigenous and settler communities. They were an agreement to protect the land and responsibly care for its resources in harmony together.

As settlers, newcomers, refugees, and Indigenous peoples, we were invited into these treaties in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. We were meant to walk alongside each other without disturbing the other’s path. However, there are multiple ways that the trauma of continued colonial violence perpetrated to Indigenous communities is ongoing. We acknowledge this harm that has been perpetrated by the Canadian government and people and we are committed to fight against the oppressive systems of colonialism, patriarchy, and racism. We are committed to learning from Indigenous communities and organizations and to unlearning the colonial mindset. We are committed to engage in a meaningful, continuous process of truth and reconciliation and to support action and not just words.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a teal cardigan, is smiling and looking up at a baby. The baby is wearing a white quilted vest, a brown aviator hat with goggles, and purple sneakers with white laces. The baby has its mouth open in a joyful expression. The background is a bright window with horizontal blinds, and a green plant is visible in the lower right corner.

***“Hope sees the
invisible, feels
the intangible,
and achieves
the impossible”***

-Helen Keller

*Author & disability rights
advocate*

Our Vision

A community characterized by gender equality where women, trans, and non-binary people and their children are empowered and safe

Our Mission

North York Women's Shelter actively supports the rights of women, trans, and non-binary people and their children to build lives free of violence by providing non-judgmental safe shelter, advocacy, and a range of programs and services including 24-hour crisis support.

Our Values

*Non-Judgement
Respect
Complexity
Active Participation
Unique Needs of Children
Service Excellence &
Innovation*

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A Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair

It's been more than a year since we shared an Annual Report to showcase the impact of North York Women's Shelter (NYWS) on the community it serves. It's been too long, and we look forward to resuming regular updates with you.

In February 2024, we marked **forty years** of providing home, hope and refuge for women, trans and non-binary people and their children fleeing violence. Over that time, more than 11,000 individuals have passed through our doors on their way to violence-free futures.

That's an incredible testament to the resilience and determination of our clients, and to the compassion and professionalism of our front-line staff. Meeting at one of the darkest times of a woman's life, NYWS staff help our clients to recover from the trauma of violence and to rediscover their inner resilience and worth.

The journey we've taken together over the last forty years has been marked with both inspiration and challenge. Together, we built an entirely new Shelter with an attached Community Collective Space - and successfully opened it two weeks after a province-wide COVID-19 lockdown was declared.

Together, we made sure that the women in our care remained safe, remained supported, and continued to pursue their goals throughout the pandemic and beyond. We do our best to ensure that our residents feel protected during their time with us, and to provide encouragement and care for their children as well.



Together, we continued to raise our voices against gender-based violence and femicide, and to advocate for the legal and social changes required to end both.

We have indeed made the impossible possible - together


In early 2024, the Board of Directors, Senior Management Team and stakeholders came together to create ***Building from Solid Ground***, NYWS' five-year strategic plan. This document charts the organization's course toward what we believe to be possible - a community characterized by gender equality where women, trans, and non-binary people and their children are empowered and safe.

We are proud, humbled, and incredibly grateful that you have shared this journey with us, and with those we serve. Every day, we make the impossible possible - in nurturing the creation of new, violence-free lives.

Sincerely,

Carol Latchford
Executive Director

Michele Robitaille
Chair, Board of Directors



***"I'm no longer
accepting the things
I cannot change...
I'm changing the
things I cannot
accept."***

-Angela Davis
Black scholar, writer & activist



Board of Directors 2023/2024

Michele Robitaille
Chair

Vidula Shetye
Secretary

Savera Hashmi
Director at Large

Megan Stephens
Director at Large

Waheeda Ekhlas Smith ^A
Director at Large

^A Resigned prior to end of term

Joulaika Buchan
Vice Chair

Barbara Elliott ^A
Treasurer

Shaunna-Marie Kerr ^A
Director at Large

Andrene Vitelli
Director at Large

Senior Management Team

Carol Latchford
Executive Director

Cheryl Denomy
Director, Development & Communications

Jhoanel Lucero Ruiz
Manager, Programs and Services

Paula Rabefiringa
Manager, Finance & Administration

Farzeen Foda
Sr. Manager, Human Resources



A Year in Review: Building Stability



For most of us, March 2020 seems a lifetime ago. The early days of a global pandemic we were initially assured would be “over in a couple of weeks”, telescoped into weeks, and then months, of lockdowns and restrictions - and then what seemed like an endlessly slow and tentative return to a “new normal”.

Our new purpose-built Shelter opened its doors just as the first wave of COVID-19 broke over Ontario. The days, weeks, and months that followed were difficult for both staff and the women and children we serve. It was challenging for staff to provide trauma-informed supportive care to our clients while navigating quarantine and infection control procedures.

By early 2023, the world had cautiously moved to a “new normal”, with the women and the children in the Shelter wrestling with the disproportionate impact of the many aspects of COVID-19 they experienced due to the layers of trauma that brought them to our doors as the pandemic began.

This impact also affected our staff, and it became clear that the staffing turnover and programming challenges the pandemic instigated needed to be addressed and a strong, visionary management team to lead the organization into its post-COVID opportunities.

In July 2023, Carol Latchford was hired as the new Executive Director of NYWS, bringing with her, more than three decades of experience in the shelter sector. Among

her first tasks as Executive Director was to assemble a Senior Management Team to support not only her but all Shelter staff in their work with the women and children we serve. By the end of March 2024, the new Senior Management team was in place.

Together with the Board of Directors, Carol and the Senior Management Team met beginning in late February to begin the strategic planning process that will guide NYWS' activities over the next five years. With the expert facilitation of Dr. Amanda Dale of There Management Consulting, ***Building from Solid Ground*** - the finalized plan, came together by the end of March 2024.

The plan consists of three distinct phases: Solidify, Crystalize, and Transform. Each of these phases, and the corresponding operational plans, will position NYWS to assume a leadership role in the struggle to eliminate femicide while, at the same time, advocating for its recognition as a separate and distinct form of murder that specifically violates the human rights of women and girls.

It's an ambitious plan, but one that accurately reflects where the organization is, where it wants to go, and what it wants to become. Building from a forty-year history of accomplishment and care, North York Women's Shelter is uniquely positioned to make significant inroads into making the impossible dream of a group of women in North York in the late 1970s not only possible, but probable.



and we haven't done it alone...

We've done it with the help of our donors, who have given so generously and faithfully when they hear our call for support - with financial contributions, with bags and boxes of hygiene products, food, diapers, hand-made blankets and quilts, and a neighbourhood-supported pizza party. They've done it with pop-up boutiques of gently used women's clothing and through participation in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, challenging our young people to be the change they wish to see in the world.

We've done it with the help of our community partners, who have provided a range of onsite supports for our residents, extending our services and ensuring the women and children we serve have the best possible chance to create meaningful new lives.

We've done it with the help of the children who live with us, who with their laughter and exuberance - and their feet thundering through the lobby rushing to make the school bus - remind us that children are the same everywhere, and that they light up every space they occupy with hope and resilience.

We have done it with the help of the women we serve, who show us every day what it takes to survive and thrive in the face of violence and disruption. They remind us that progress - even what seems to be excruciatingly slow progress - is still progress, hard-won and deserving of celebration.

We have done it with the help of our Board of Directors and other volunteers who have filled gaps and stepped up again and again during very challenging times over the past year, and the past four years while COVID turned our lives inside out.

We've done it with the help of our staff, who have remained committed to the work and those we serve, advocating for and supporting them until they are able to find their own voice.

We've done it with **your** help, and for that we are profoundly humbled and grateful.





NYWS by the numbers

Emergency Shelter and Supports

Resident Days

- Women 4,058
- Children 5,761

Number of Admissions 69

Number of Vacant Bed Days 0

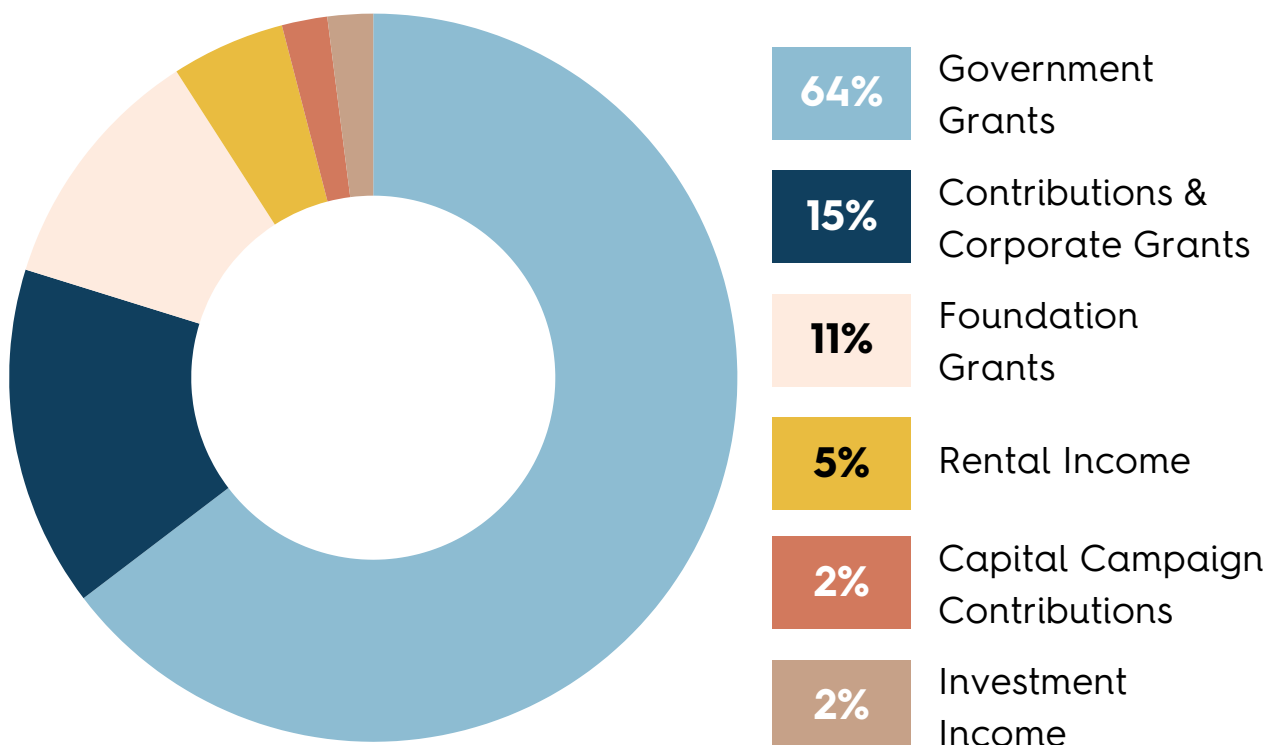
Referrals made to other agencies due to no capacity 252

Transitional Housing and Supports

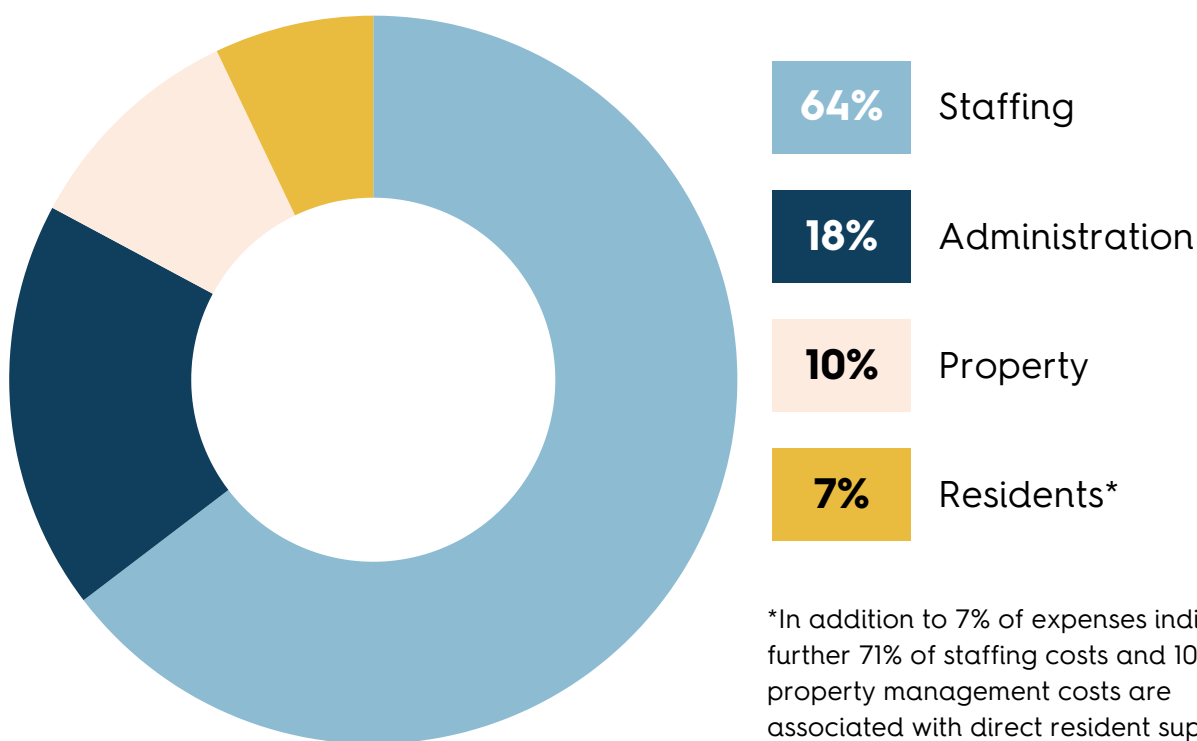
Women Served 26

Referrals made to other agencies due to no capacity 45

Where the money comes from



Where the money goes



*In addition to 7% of expenses indicated, a further 71% of staffing costs and 100% of property management costs are associated with direct resident support.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2024

REVENUE

Government Grants	\$1,677,342
Contributions & Corporate Grants	395,453
Foundation Grants	294,764
Rental Income	132,000
Capital Campaign Contributions	59,855
Investment Income	47,656
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	\$2,607,070
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EXPENSES

Staffing	\$1,892,655
Property	304,909
Administration	539,327
Residents*	215,215
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	\$2,952,106
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OPERATIONAL (DEFICIT) OR SURPLUS

(\$345,036)

Source: North York Women's Shelter Audited Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2024.

To obtain a complete set of audited financial statements, please send an email to info@nyws.ca

* 71% of staffing costs and 100% of property management costs are associated with direct resident support.



Thank you!

Michele Robitaille

Chair, Board of Directors

Carol Latchford

Executive Director

Cheryl Denomy

Director, Development & Communications

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