



# A Safe Place<sup>✿</sup>

## Annual Report

2021- 2022

Strathcona  
Shelter Society  
- 'A Safe Place'



# President's Message

As we close another successful year of the Strathcona Shelter Society, I extend a very hearty thank you to all that have contributed their time and efforts towards ensuring the well being, health and safety of our clients and staff. While this past year has seen significant relaxation of pandemic restrictions and a normalization of operations, the instances of family violence have seen a notable increase. The services of A Safe Place continue to be in high demand.

*Kris Sakowsky*

Kris Sakowsky  
President, Board of  
Directors  
Strathcona Shelter Society  
Ltd

Our Board is comprised of a group of dedicated individuals, from varied backgrounds, that have worked tirelessly – often beyond the usual business of the Shelter Society. Through the year, the Board, in collaboration with our Executive Director and management staff, has completed another successful year of operations. We continue to pursue a multi-year strategic plan developed in 2021 that affirms our Mission and lays out our Strategic Goals. In particular, considerable resources have been expended in an initial due diligence and feasibility assessment; completion of preliminary design and cost estimates; and applications for available grant funding for replacement Shelter facilities.

We'd like to thank our long serving past president, Sandra Hanington for all her years of providing exemplary service to A Safe Place. We welcome new board members Karen Zhan and Danielle Klooster to our team.

In recent months two new members have joined the Board. Their added skills, knowledge, and experience have brought some welcome input to the board activities. I thank each board member and the Executive Director for their dedication, commitment and perspective – and also thanks to those who have provided additional services and consultation to the Shelter Society Board over the past year.

## **2021–2022 Board of Directors**

Kris Sakowsky  
Scott Waters  
Mike Cameron  
Sandra Hanington  
Lungile Tinarwo  
Kathy Vasko  
Karen Zhan  
Danielle Klooster

Grants continue to provide a mainstay in meeting our funding requirements. A very generous thank you to the Alberta Government Ministry of Community and Social Services which continues to provide core funding which forms an essential base by which we are able to deliver the services so needed by our clientele and community. Also thanks to Strathcona County for Volunteer and Community Collaboration funding. We were also fortunate to be beneficiaries of special COVID-19 assistance from both the federal and provincial governments. A thank you to all those involved in helping to defray added costs and challenges incurred, particularly as a result of the pandemic.

We applaud the people who work at A Safe Place. They work in many diverse roles and are crucial in making A Safe Place effective within the community in which it serves. We are grateful to have the support of a group of dedicated and passionate volunteers, as well as long-time sponsors/donors who embody the spirit of compassion. The amount of funding received through annual donations and fundraising efforts of other individuals and organizations during the pandemic has been unprecedented. Without them, their efforts, and their donations, A Safe Place could not function.



# Message from the Executive Director

*Karen Kadatz*

Karen Kadatz  
Executive Director  
Strathcona Shelter  
Society Ltd.

When we began this fiscal year, we had high hopes the pandemic was behind us and we could focus on returning to our normal service delivery. Instead, the year continued to bring many challenges for our organization, our partners, our staff and especially for the families and individuals we serve.

We continued to implement COVID-19 safety processes and procedures to ensure we were adhering to health safety needs along with keeping our families and individuals safe from domestic abuse. Although our residential capacity continued to be restricted, we found ways to accommodate those who needed shelter by utilizing alternative housing options and working closely with community partners. Even though the uncertainty and concern about the pandemic remained, our dedicated staff demonstrated great passion to our work by continuing to provide the care and commitment to the services provided to all those who ask for our assistance. With a skilled and dedicated leadership team firmly in place, we continued to develop and examine our policies, procedures and staffing structure and began the process to move forward with roles and positions to ensure optimum service delivery.

We also strengthened our relationships with community partners, such as with Strathcona County as steering committee partners on Community Safety and Wellbeing and the Violence Trauma Suicide Prevention initiatives.

This was also a pivotal year with the tragic discovery of the unmarked graves discovered in the former residential school in Kamloops in the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc Nation and our agency continued to participate in trainings and initiatives in regards to the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.

Once again the support through grants, donations and fundraising efforts has been amazing! It helps us deliver programming; maintain our emergency shelter and second stage housing; attract and retain highly skilled staff and ensure our clients have everything they need to move forward with lives free from violence.

To our donors, supporters, community partners, volunteers, Board of Director members and staff – your time, commitment, passion and dedication make all the difference to keeping our families safe.

Thank you!

# Our Story So Far

## Our Vision

To create a community free from domestic violence and abuse in any form.

## Our Mission

A Safe Place is driven to create safe and lasting solutions for those impacted by domestic violence and abuse.

## Our Values

- Safety and Security
- Compassion
- Inclusivity
- Connection
- Empowerment
- Innovation

## Our History

Since 1982, A Safe Place has been empowering women to attain lives of peace, connection and freedom. In 1984, we opened the doors of our 25-bed emergency shelter to the community. Since that time, skilled professionals, passionate volunteers, dedicated donors, and proud allies have served tens of thousands of women and children from Strathcona county, the greater Edmonton area, and beyond.

We continue to provide comprehensive services, including: advocacy, education, court support, counselling, supported referrals, Community Outreach, New Beginnings, and so much more.



*For almost 40 years, A Safe Place has been a safe place to call, to connect, to learn and to be when home is no longer safe.*

# Our Strategic Goals

1

Offer a spectrum of programs and services to meet community needs

2

Secure facilities that meet Strathcona Shelter Society program requirements

3

Maximize fund raising in order to be financially viable and sustainable

4

Invest in staff and relationships to further our mission

5

Maximize awareness of Strathcona Shelter Society presence, mission and needs

# Our Programs & Services

Our customized approach supports clients holistically, and meets them where they are.

Because we value collaboration, we are committed to building and maintaining strong partnerships – we leverage resources to provide services with lasting impact.

PROGRAM	DETAILS
Crisis & Shelter Help Line	24/7 support for anyone in crisis and/or looking for support or information regarding domestic abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse.
Emergency Shelter	A 35-bed residential facility that provides a safe, secure environment for women and children as they transition to longer-term supports.
Second Stage Housing	Three second stage units bridge the gap to long-term stability by addressing the barrier of affordable housing.
Outreach	One-on-one supports for non-residential clients navigating domestic abuse and/or violence.
Public Education	Responsive presentations that build community capacity for addressing domestic abuse.

# By the Numbers

In the recent fiscal year, A Safe Place accommodated 213 shelter residents. These numbers are much lower than previous years due to COVID-19.

·Prior to COVID-19, A Safe Place Shelter supported and sheltered an average of 700 individuals annually.

During COVID-19, A Safe Place has been deemed an essential service and is open to anyone in need. The shelter follows all protocols as mandated by Alberta Health Services and provides PPE to all who are at the shelter.



## 213

213 Shelter Residents  
178 Women with children  
35 single women

## 37,662

37,662 Crisis & Shelter  
Intake Line Minutes

## 76

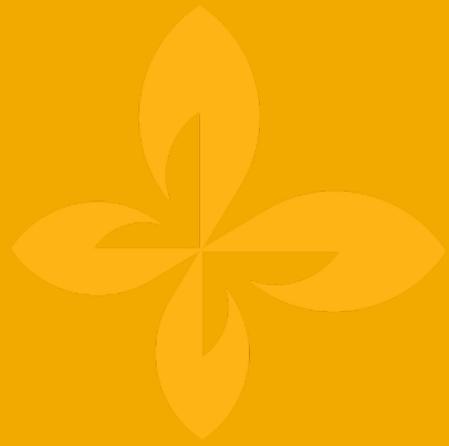
76 Community  
Outreach Families

In the past year, A Safe Place staff dealt with a variety of calls to the Crisis & Shelter Help Line: residential admission requests, calls for information and crisis support, client related calls, and other calls from community members, offers of donations, etc.

The Community Outreach program is available to residents of Strathcona County, and provides one-on-one supports for anyone navigating domestic violence, or supporting a co-worker, friend, or loved one who is experiencing family violence.

Outreach clients can receive long term intensive support over several months if required.

# Maya's story...



I didn't recognize the abuse at first. I had been raised in a physically abusive home, and didn't initially recognize his behaviours as abuse. Over time, the name-calling, control, sexual abuse, and financial abuse (which I'd never heard of before) all worsened.

I have been hospitalized twice for attempted suicide and twice for breakdowns. I knew I was in trouble by then but didn't know what to do or where to go. Few people believed me because they could not see the emotional abuse I endured. It left no bruises.

The most physical he ever got with me was shoving or restraining me by pinning me down. This was not hard for him as I am only 5'4" and weighed just over 100 lbs. while he was 6'2" and nearly 300 lbs. I did call the RCMP four times over 19 years. All four times he was arrested, charged, and pled guilty. All four times, we separated for as long as a year.

The problem was that I always went back. I guess I wasn't ready. I didn't want to live with the abuse anymore but I really missed the man I had fallen in love with. Plus, money was a huge worry. I've finally left again and although I am not quite ready for the next step (divorcing him) I am ready to start my new life without him.

I miss my home and the town where I came from and sometimes I still miss my husband. What I do not miss is the abuse.

I will find out who I am again, the person I was before I met my husband. I will be whole again.



# Our Volunteers

We are very fortunate to have so much support from our community who are so willing to volunteer in so many ways.



**Kitchen and Shelter Donations Volunteers:** After a hiatus during COVID, our volunteers are returning to the shelter to support our kitchen and donation programs. Our Kitchen Volunteers support our staff with the preparation of nutritious and delicious meals for our residents.

**Theme Board Volunteer:** This new program is our Theme Board situated in the main common area of the shelter. Our volunteer creates information and inspirational themes for our residents and staff to enjoy.

**Food Bank Volunteers:** We have community volunteers pick up our food bank donation on Tuesdays and Fridays.

**Administration Office Volunteers:** : At our business office we have two dedicated volunteers who sift and sort donations for our shelter program and the New Beginnings Program.

**Community Volunteers:** In an attempt to support the people we serve and to raise awareness of our shelter in the community, we have encouraged talented community members to sew for our clients. These projects produce beautiful handcrafted comfort items for our clients to keep and include 'Buddy Bags', 'Hug Blankets', quilts, and heat pads. Our residents love them.



**Fundraising Volunteers:** For decades, a dedicated, passionate and mighty team have come out year after year to support our initiatives such as Tree of Hope as they raise much needed funds, awareness and hope for A Safe Place.

