

A Safe Place

ANNUAL REPORT



2023-2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

President’s Report.....	03
Executive Director’s Report.....	04
Who We Are.....	05
One Client’s Story.....	08
Growth & Success.....	09
Innovation.....	11
Board Self-Evaluation.....	13
Our Supporters.....	14
Contact Us.....	18

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**DANIELLE
MILLER**

What a momentous year it has been for our organization. Some of our major accomplishments include:

- Implemented an informal advocacy strategy to elevate our profile and raise awareness with all levels of government, which involved tours of the shelter for our County Councillors, MLAs, MP and the Minister of Children and Family Services.
- Reorganized and restructured some of our committees of the board.
- Developed and adopted an ambitious new three-year strategic plan.
- Established a Board Recruitment Strategy to align with and reflect our strategic priorities.
- Significantly advanced our governance work and leadership plan, overhauling our board policies, engaging the services of an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) consultant, attending governance educational workshops, and beginning the process of a substantial rewriting of our Articles of Incorporation/Bylaws.
- Developed a Board Values Charter.
- Established some processes and standard operating procedures for the Board, including use of a shared cloud platform for documents, naming conventions, and more.

- Worked to foster relationships within the community and raising community awareness.

And this is just the board side of things! The yeoman's work of transforming the model, the programming and the practices that the ASP leadership team is achieving, under our Executive Director's visionary, innovative and strong guidance has been nothing short of miraculous. A hearty congratulations and massive vote of appreciation is well deserved.

I recently had a very inspiring conversation with our Executive Director and Director of Shelter Services, looking at how far we have come, in society, in the sector and specifically as a shelter. We also spent time envisioning what might be possible as we go forward. I am so encouraged and filled with hope for the impact we can have, with the visionary, strategic, innovative thinking we employ and the commitment to trauma-informed, results-oriented action and practice I see at all levels of the organization.

Lastly, may I express the deepest level of gratitude for our funders, community partners, donors and volunteers. Everyone has a contribution to make, and I am daily inspired and heartened by how so many facets of the community come together to support our important work. Thank you all.

Going forward, we are dedicated to advancing our strategic priorities and to serving, to the highest levels, individuals and families impacted by domestic violence and abuse. I encourage everyone to read through our strategic plan, which can be found on the reports tab of our website. Here's to another amazing year of innovation and impact!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Danielle Miller".



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As we close another remarkable year at A Safe Place, I am filled with immense pride for the strides we have made in our mission to provide safety, support, and hope to individuals and families affected by domestic abuse and violence. This year has been a testament to our collective resilience, dedication, and commitment to creating a safer community.

I am excited to be working alongside Board President Danielle Miller and our Board of Directors. Their diverse expertise, professionalism, passion for our cause, and visionary leadership have already begun to make a significant impact and I am confident that their guidance will propel us to new heights.

This year also marked the formation of our new leadership team, led by Director of Shelter Services, Cortney Lohnes. They have been instrumental in maintaining our focus of providing high standards of client-centered care. Their expertise, professionalism and efforts have not only strengthened our operations but also fostered an environment of trust, compassion, and excellence. None of our achievements would be possible without the extraordinary dedication of our staff. They are the heart and soul of A Safe Place, working tirelessly to provide a safe and nurturing environment for our clients. Thank you for your unwavering dedication, resilience, and hard work in empowering our clients to rebuild their lives.

To our volunteers, your selfless dedication of time and skills has enriched our programs and extended our reach within the community. Whether through working in the kitchen or donation room, fundraising at our Tree of Hope event, or helping at our golf tournament, your efforts have had a profound impact. Your commitment to our cause and willingness to go above and beyond exemplify the true spirit of community and service.



**KAREN
KADATZ**

We are also deeply grateful to our donors whose generosity and support have been the bedrock of our success. Your financial contributions have enabled us to enhance our programs, revitalize our facilities, and provide critical resources to those in need. Your belief in our mission fuels our work and allows us to continue making a difference in the lives of so many.

As we look to the coming year, we remain committed to advancing our mission with passion and determination. With the continued support of our Board of Directors, leadership team, staff, community partners, donors, and volunteers, we will strive to enhance our services, advocate for systemic change, and work towards a future where every individual can live free from violence.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to each of you for your support. Your compassion, empathy, and unwavering commitment to our mission inspire me daily. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve, and together, we will continue to build a safer, more compassionate community. Thank you for standing with us.



A Safe Place[✿]

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.

VISION

A community where families and individuals are safe, secure and supported.

MISSION

To provide those experiencing domestic abuse or crisis with compassionate, trauma-informed care and support.

VALUES

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

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.

Crisis & Shelter Hotline: 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 Shelter: 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.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Danielle Miller

Secretary
Janice Penner

Vice-President
Carla Howatt

Director
Grace Wong

Treasurer
Nicole O'Dell

Director
Monte Koenig



STRATEGIC GOALS

- ✦ Offer a spectrum of programs and services to meet community needs
- ✦ Secure facilities that meet Strathcona Shelter Society program requirements
- ✦ Maximize fund raising in order to be financially viable and sustainable
- ✦ Invest in staff and relationships to further our mission
- ✦ Maximize awareness of Strathcona Shelter Society presence, mission and needs

ONE CLIENT'S TESTIMONIAL

Thank you to A Safe Place. I was able to get my open work permit, and by staying in shelter I was able to open my eyes and see that I could get help. A Safe Place is where I felt the safest, special, taken care of, and supported. I never felt alone as there were staff that spoke Spanish and were able to hear me, help me and give me reassurance. I felt that everyone at A Safe Place had lots of empathy towards my son and I. It wasn't just food and a roof over my head. It felt like I was a part of a family.

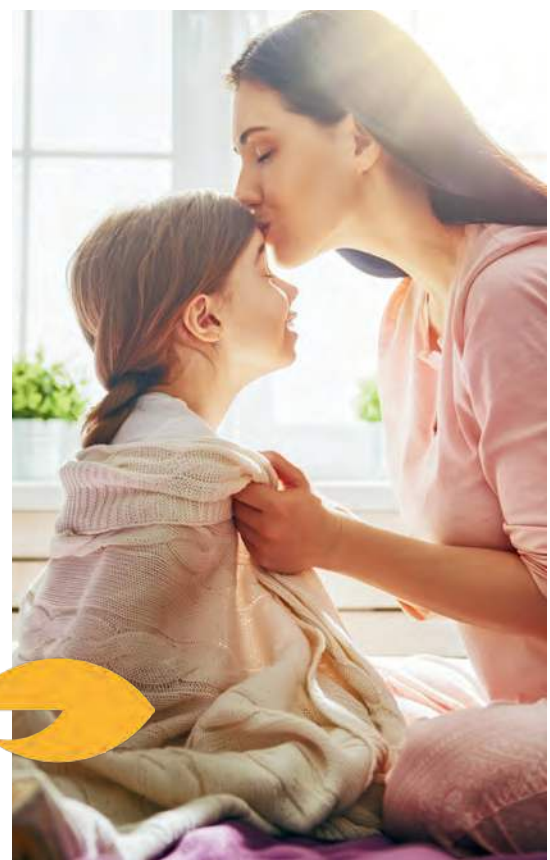
ONE CLIENT'S STORY

A mother and her 3-year old came into shelter in August of 2023. They stayed in shelter with us for 32 weeks. As a Spanish-speaking person with very little English, this Mom was seeking safety from her partner and young son's father. When she arrived, she was not able to tell us what her immigration status was.

She was sure she was able to be in Canada, but did not know how she had a SIN number or if she was able to access Income Support. Over the first few months in shelter, with an EPO in place, Mom and son started to settle and figure out what was the next step. Mom was worried she may have to go back to Mexico, and was worried that the father's friends would find her and perpetrate more violence.

She was also worried that she would not be able to take her young son out of Canada. After months of roadblocks and hurdles, waiting for Immigration Canada to decide on her status based on compassionate grounds, a second stage shelter in the area case conferenced with the team at A Safe Place and agreed to place the Mom and son in one of their apartments with no approved funding.

Mom was still not accessing Income Support due to her immigration status. Mom and her young son were isolated in shelter, speaking very little English and feeling very worried about what would be next. The son spent time in our Innovative Child Care program while Mom attended English as a Second Language classes in the community.



Mom was supported to report the fraud that had been part of the abuse to the RCMP and Edmonton Police Services, with the support of Spanish-speaking staff from the shelter. She also disclosed and reported sexual abuse that had been perpetrated against her, telling our staff about what had happened to her, opening up more and more as the months went on.

This Mom and son saw dozens of families come and go while they were stuck in limbo. If it hadn't been for the support of the second-stage shelter, Mom and son would still be with us waiting for news from Immigration Canada. Now that they are in second stage, while they continue to wait, the son can start Kindergarten in the fall, and Mom can look for work while continuing to learn English.

While the Mom and son likely have more roadblocks ahead, our capacity as a shelter to maintain support for them for the duration of their stay will hopefully remind them that they have support, are not alone and can ask for help from us and other's anytime they need.

GROWTH & SUCCESS

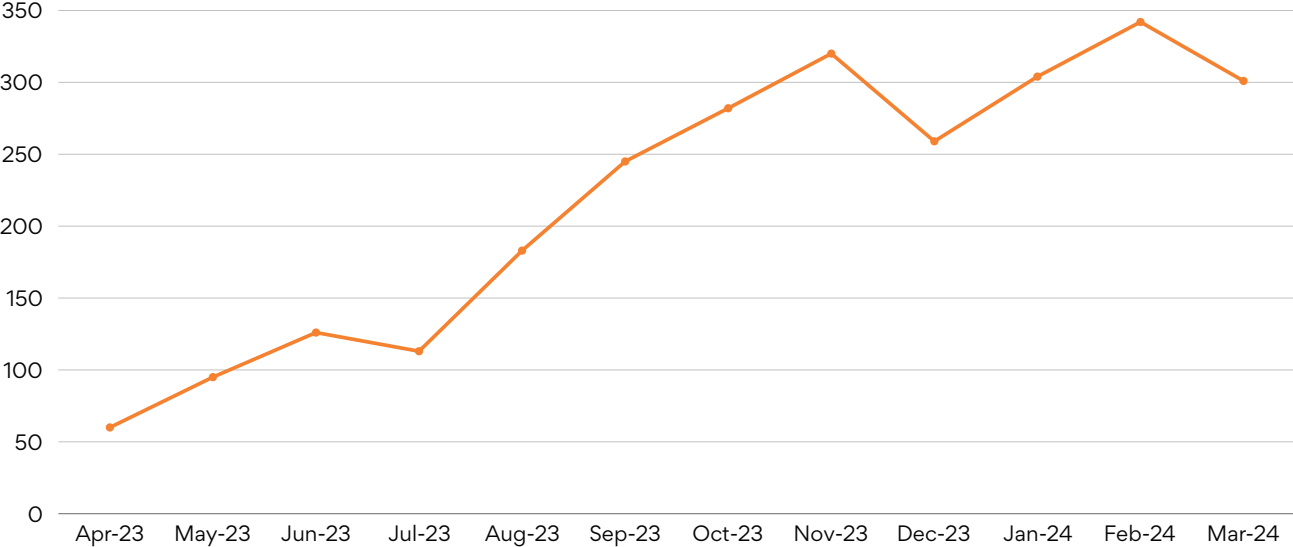
In 2023-2024, A Safe Place served 253 clients, including more than 135 children. Our services continue to be crucial for women and families in Strathcona County and the surrounding area. We anticipate continued growth over the coming years, as more women seek our support in escaping domestic violence. We must be ready to respond to those needs.



GROWTH & SUCCESS

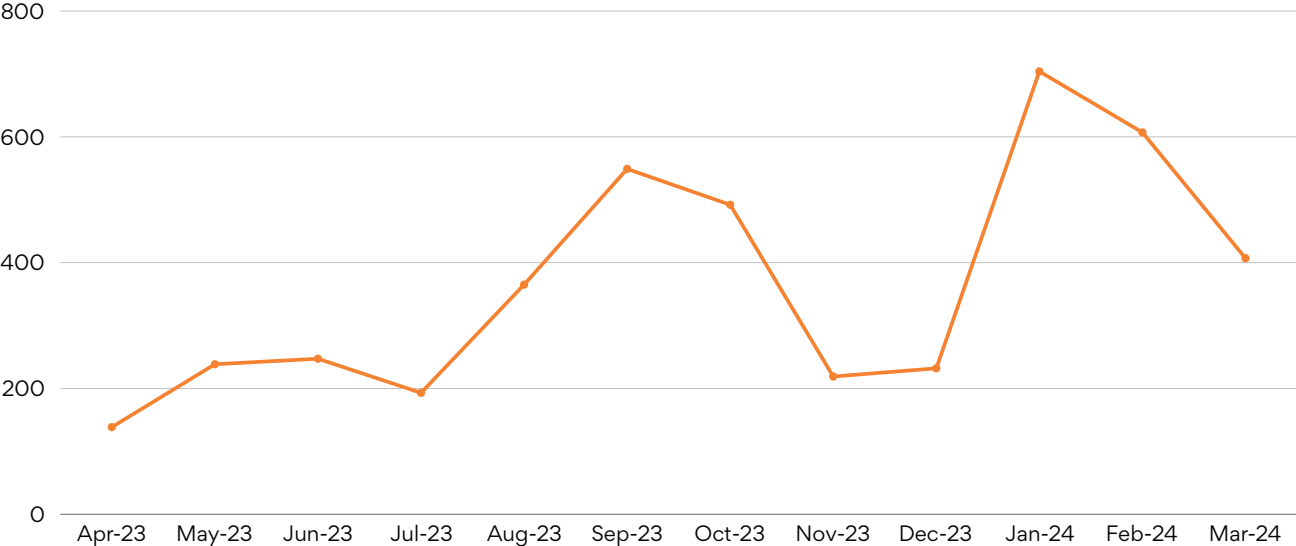
With more than 135 children served by A Safe Place, there was a significant amount of resources dedicated to childcare and associated needs, peaking in February 2024 at more than 340 childcare visits.

Number of Childcare Visits



Meanwhile, the number of childcare hours peaked in January 2024, at 731.75 hours.

Number of Childcare Hours



INNOVATION

A Safe Place is dedicated to continuously looking for improved ways to serve our clients and the community, without compromising the successes we've had to date. By keeping a constant eye on innovation – both in what is considered emerging best practice within the industry, and in what will best serve our clients' specific needs – we ensure that we will be able to meet the rapidly evolving demands being experienced by shelters across Alberta.

CARE TEAM MODEL

We have shifted our overall strategy for working with families in the last year. Our Care Team model highlights the parent in shelter as the expert in her and her children's lives.

All meetings related to the family include the parent, shelter staff, natural supports and other professional supports from outside shelter. This shift enables us to work more effectively as a team, and as a trauma-informed space for families.

Inviting other professionals and natural supports to the table to support in shelter means that the work in shelter is just the beginning. A team that can support far after a family leaves shelter ensures the family has the best chance for success as possible.



**STRATHCONA
COUNTY FCSS**
Co-Location

✦ This year, we moved to having one of our Outreach staff co-located at the Strathcona County Family and Community Services (FCSS) office. This has enabled our Outreach Program to support clients outside of our helpline, and build the capacity of other professionals to assess intimate partner violence risk.

The Outreach staff are collaboratively supporting families that attend the FCSS office and provide expertise around Family Violence, risk assessments and safety planning. This shift in practice has increased our collaboration with community partners.

INNOVATION



PRIMARY CARE NETWORK Nurse Practitioner Support

✦ Through the Primary Care Network, Nurse Jean spends two half-days each week in shelter supporting the health and wellness of the families. As a Nurse Practitioner, Jean has been able to assess, refer and support with prescriptions for families in shelter without them having to leave the safety of our shelter.

She has supported with strangulation assessments, pregnancy care, chronic health management, and addictions and mental health support. She has also

supported with care after families move on from shelter, ensuring they are resourced with medical care moving forward. Our partnership with the PCN has also enabled us to provide vaccination clinics in shelter for families to receive their flu and COVID-19 boosters.

SHOPPING DAYS

Every 4-5 weeks, Abbie and Val set up a 'Shopping Day' at the Shelter. They take out racks of donated clothing, toiletries, purses, jewelry and more, and the women get their chance to 'shop' through the items and pick what they want.

Initiatives of this nature are crucial in establishing a sense of normalcy for our clients, many of whom have seen their lives uprooted or drastically changed as they escape domestic violence.

Item Donations

We continue to see support from those donating items for our clients.



FORT SASKATCHEWAN ROYAL PURPLE
40 personal care bags



SAINTS CHURCH
25 twin-sized quilts



BRISBIN FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC
Mother's Day gifts

BOARD SELF EVALUATION

One of the new practices that the Board has implemented is an annual board self-evaluation. Each board member completes the evaluation independently and submits it to me, as President, to analyze and synthesize. There were five responses. Here are the categories and how we scored ourselves:

1. How well has the Board done its job?

Rating: Excellent 5/5

2. How well has the Board conducted itself?

Rating: Excellent 2/5 Satisfactory 3/5

3. Board's relationship with the Executive Director:

Rating: Excellent 3/5 Satisfactory 2/5

4. My performance as a Board member:

Rating not to be shared

5. Feedback to the Chair of the Board:

Rating: Excellent 4/5 Satisfactory 1/5

Areas of Strength

- We have measurable goals
- Our work and reporting is aligned with our strategic priorities
- We understand and fulfill our roles and responsibilities
- We have a strong, healthy relationship with our Executive Director
- We have strong leadership within the Board, which supports productivity and achievement.

Areas for Growth

- We can develop stronger community and stakeholder relationships and engagement
- We can (and we are) improve our financial reporting processes
- We can ensure that our Executive Director has all the support and professional development opportunities she requires/desires.
- The Chair can better delegate responsibilities.

This valuable exercise informs our practices and policies. Thanks to each Board Member who participated.

OUR SUPPORTERS



SHELL SCOTFORD
Corporate volunteering

✦ This year, we worked closely with Shell Scotford to support with the revitalization of our shelter front and back yards, as well as the clean-up of the backyards of our three second-stage townhomes.

We had the pleasure of visiting Shell Scotford to talk about the ongoing support and ideas for moving forward with this relationship.

Out of this, an additional group of volunteers supported the clean-up and renovations of one of our townhomes, which greatly expedited our next move-in!



OUR SUPPORTERS



**BFC
FLOORING**
Supplies and labour

✦ No year comes without challenges, and 2023-2024 was no exception, with a maintenance needs and a number of repairs required to our townhomes and our main office. This even resulted in a temporary office closure – but help wasn't far behind!

We were overjoyed to receive support from the BFC Flooring and Design Centre, which donated supplies and labour, helping to complete repairs for one of our families!

This support means the world not just to us, but to those clients whose lives were made just a bit more comfortable.



GOLF TOURNAMENT

As we gear up for the 4th Annual 'A Safe Place' Golf Tournament, taking place on August 23, 2024 at Northern Bear Golf Course, we want to extend another thank-you to all those who supported our 2023 tournament, including our title sponsor, AECON, and a number of other dedicated businesses:

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR TOURNAMENT SPONSOR

AECON



Councillor
Lorne Harvey



THANK YOU



Thank you to our amazing contributors who help to ensure that A Safe Place is available to individuals and families when they need us. In addition to those granters listed here, thank you to all of our amazing supporters and donors.

We could not do what we do without any of you!

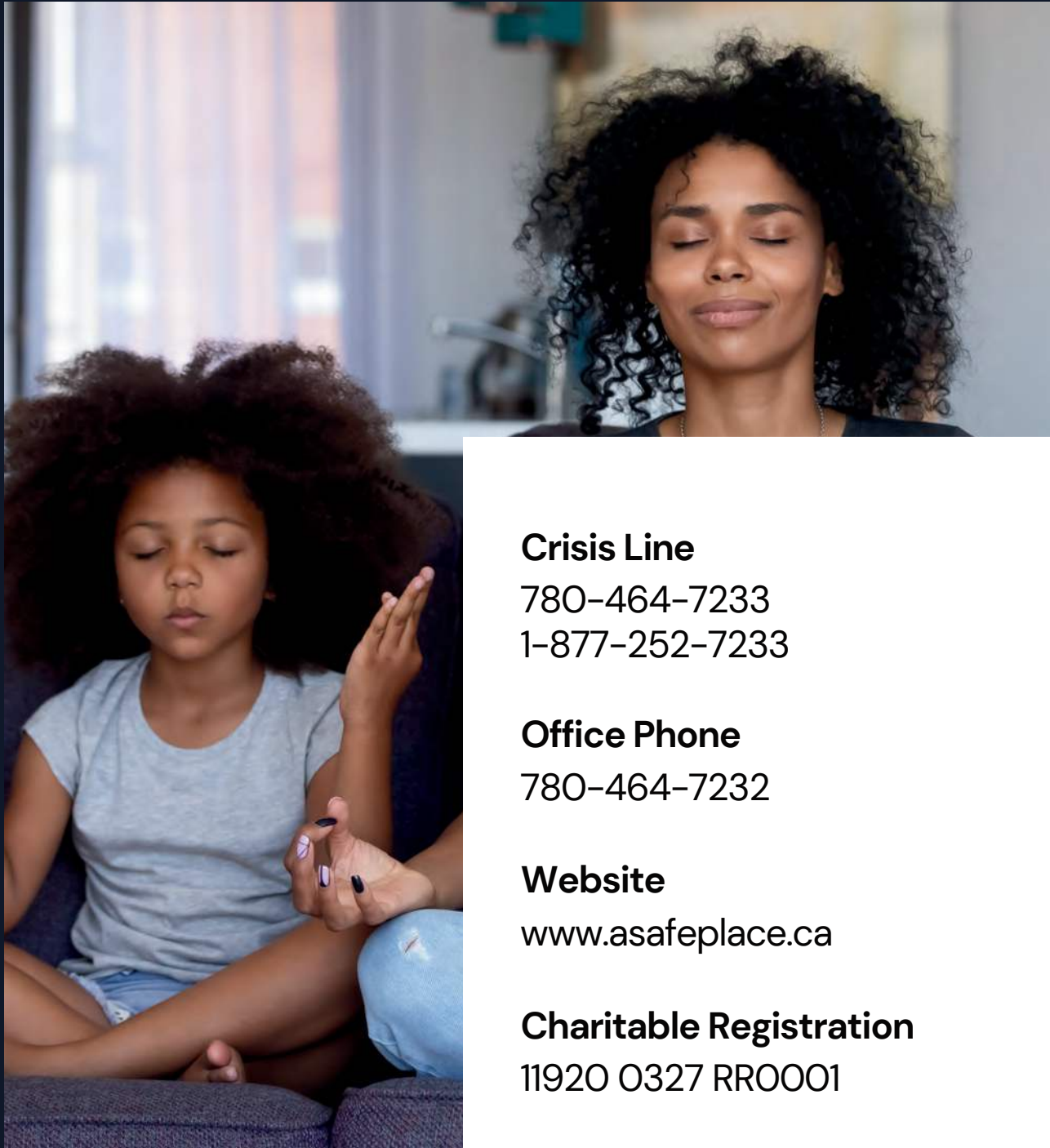


A Safe Place



Support & Resources for Domestic Abuse

www.ASafePlace.ca | #ASafePlace



Crisis Line

780-464-7233

1-877-252-7233

Office Phone

780-464-7232

Website

www.asafeplace.ca

Charitable Registration

11920 0327 RR0001

A Safe Place

Support & Resources for Domestic Abuse