

SOUTH OKANAGAN WOMEN IN NEED SOCIETY (SOWINS)

# ANNUAL REPORT

April 2012 - March 2013

2012 - 2013

Assisting women and their children to  
live free from abuse and violence and  
make lasting change in their lives.

218-246 MARTIN STREET, PENTICTON BC

A report on activities of the  
South Okanagan Women in  
Need Society (SOWINS)  
April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

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*Vision: A world where women and children live free of abuse and violence*

*Mission: To provide empowerment through short-term housing, support to families, and building of awareness about abuse in the communities of the South Okanagan.*

*Mandate: To provide services for women and children who have experienced or are at risk of abuse, threats or violence.*

### *Governance Report by Lynae Locheed, President*

At present the Board of the South Okanagan Women in Need Society is made up of the Board Chair and four Directors whose primary responsibility and function is to provide sound governance in accordance and compliance with: BC Society Act, Imagine Canada Ethical Code and SOWINS' own Vision, Constitution, By-Laws, and Code of Ethics and Values. The board does its work through several committees as outlined below.

The Policy Committee ensures that our Policy Manual remains up to date so we provide compliant, relevant and consistently sound governance. A major initiative to meet new Imagine Canada Standards was begun this fiscal year and will continue to November of 2013. This intensive exercise will see SOWINS benefit from the high level of credibility and trust that Imagine Canada accreditation provides in the eyes of private and corporate donors.

The Finance Committee reviews in detail the Society's monthly financial statements to ensure accountability in all areas of expenditures and income.

The Fundraising Committee has the mandate to close the gap between anticipated expenditures and income as determined by the annual budget. Pro-active and creative, the group is anticipating a successful year working to expand relationships with existing donors and establish new private and corporate relationships. The Board plays a crucial role in developing and implementing fundraising activities. A Fund Raising/Public Relations Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator were hired to the management team in 2012 to support the Society's work in this area.

In support of the Fund Raising Committee and SOWINS as a whole, the Public Relations Committee works to educate, inform and promote our vision and mandate throughout the communities of the South Okanagan. A major undertaking during this fiscal year was the redesign of the website and

branding image, which will be completed during 2013-14 and will strongly support SOWINS' public relations work.

To offer mentorship, education and support to the Directors, the Board Development Committee works to provide information and guidance in all areas of Governance. During 2012-2013 an Annual Board Evaluation process was introduced and implemented that will strengthen the Board's effectiveness and clear focus as we move forward into 2013 - 2014.

During the past year, these accountabilities and responsibilities have been admirably carried out with fiduciary care and commitment. The Board will focus on increasing the number of Directors to better fulfill its role in the new fiscal year.

*A Strategic Plan will be developed in September 2013 to identify and establish clear and concise goals for SOWINS to focus on and move towards over the next three to five years.*

SOWINS is a multi faceted Society. While our Vision and Mandate keep our focus clear, it is crucial that we continue to move forward with clear strategies in order to continue the work that we do effectively and successfully. To this end, a new Strategic Plan will be developed in September 2013. This is yet another exciting and vital endeavor that the Board and Management Team, with input from every facet of SOWINS, will engage in together. It will ensure that our ongoing success is not only maintained, but is brought to ever higher levels of success in achieving SOWINS' Vision.

The Board expresses its gratitude to our Executive Director, whose dedication, guidance and wisdom provides essential support to the Board's Governance role; its appreciation to the Management team, whose expertise and commitment are commendable, and recognition to the staff who provide the services of SOWINS with compassion and professionalism.

As the Board Chair, I extend my thanks to each of SOWINS' Board Directors for the dedication, time, wisdom, determination and insight that they contribute to the effective and strong governance of our agency.

**SOWINS**  
(South Okanagan Women in  
Need Society)

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
at March 31, 2013

Lynae Locheed,  
PRESIDENT

Peggy Nicholson,  
VICE PRESIDENT

Trudy Hanratty,  
TREASURER

Alice Deletsay,  
DIRECTOR

Maimie DeSilva,  
DIRECTOR

Pamela Antrim,  
DIRECTOR

Veronica Caione,  
DIRECTOR  
(resigned due to health concerns)

Eleanor Summer,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Trudy, Lynae, Maimie & Alice

## *Operations Report by Eleanor Summer, Executive Director*

The time is here again to connect with our members and share recollections of another year. Little did I know that when I started with SOWINS in late 1997 that I would still be here to talk about the challenges and triumphs we faced in 2012!

I want to thank the board as a whole and the directors individually for their energy, talent and commitment to SOWINS and our clients. Without them our work as staff would be infinitely harder and our clients would have fewer options to create lasting change in their lives.

As I look back over the past year I am impressed with the way staff have taken on additional challenges and responsibilities and shone through the process. Liz and Erica growing the CWWA program through school presentations and the GIRLS Conference; Kimanna enhancing the Mature Women's program through the social and support group; Brenda working through all the confusion of the new Employment BC program.

The past year has been one of constant change especially for our Outreach and Healing Program staff and clients. The new Family Law Act has altered the landscape for our clients. Sam and Sheila have worked hard to stay on top of the issues in order to provide the services needed. To all the rest of the staff, thank you so much for doing what you do best... caring.

The management team has undertaken some major changes in the way we do our work, with technology upgrades and service/resources planning ... all while ensuring the day to day work runs smoothly. I would be remiss were I not to note the great contribution of Bethany and Samarpan our Volunteers and Fundraising/Public Relations Coordinators whose positions replaced the Resources Coordinator position last summer.

We are looking forward to our strategic planning session in September as a chance to chart the

course for the next few years. We have been unable in the current fiscal climate to embark on building second stage housing and residential services for women needing help with addictions and mental health issues. With the help of our members and supporters we want to focus on those projects and provide more services for our moms and kids.

In closing I want to thank our board, staff, volunteers and clients for allowing us all to do the best work we

can to help abused women move along to the next stage of their lives. The transition house staff, who are so passionate about the work they do, and the volunteers who keep WINGS and other services running help to make it a joy to do what we do.

*We have been unable in the current fiscal climate to embark on building second stage housing and residential services for women needing help with addictions and mental health issues.*

*With the help of our members and supporters we want to focus on those projects and provide more services for our moms and kids.*

*"The past year has been one of constant change especially for our Outreach and Healing Program staff and clients. The new Family Law Act has altered the landscape for our clients."*

## *WiNGS Thrift Store by Linda Blackwell, Store Manager*

**Optimism:** *The tendency to expect the best and believe or hope things will turn out well and to see the positive side of things.* **Perseverance:** *A determined continuation-steady and continued belief over a long period, especially despite difficulties or set-backs. No two words better describe the attitude and actions of volunteers and management at WINGS over the past year.*

Although we know other businesses are suffering, we expect better of our efforts and have made a number of changes in past months.

Concerned over sagging sales, the decision was made to cut expenses further by cutting back on store hours by one hour per day thereby also reducing wage expenses by twenty eight hours per month. It was not an easy decision but was necessary for the future of the store. We are optimistic that we will see the benefits.

Our newspaper ads were becoming less effective so we pursued radio advertising and it has paid off. Customers continually mention hearing about WINGS on the radio and SUN FM is giving us two for one spots because we are non-profit.

It is clear that the arrival of Value Village has had an impact on all the thrift stores in town. So too has the closure of many stores on Main Street. The empty store fronts are an eyesore and foot traffic has decreased but we persevere by providing a clean well merchandised store and superb customer service. Added to our merchandise is an assortment of rhinestone jewellery brought in as a fundraiser during the

Women Front & Centre Gala which had a "Diamonds Are Forever" theme this year. More recently we have added WINGS as a destination on the "Bead Trails" which is featured at many locations throughout the South Okanagan. Enthusiasts can visit WINGS to purchase our special bead for their collection

In June 2012 we were dealt another financial blow when I was ordered off work by my doctor for medical reasons. I was being paid sick time and relief manager Anna also needed to be paid. I was absent from work for almost six months. Anna did an amazing job. She persevered despite setbacks and WINGS SURVIVED. I will be forever grateful that she was there to step in.

We are starting to see a difference in customer attitude and spending habits, which leads us to believe we will be financially successful once again.

Even more important is that all of us at the store are inspired knowing that if we have helped even one of our clients who has experienced violence or abuse move ahead, then we are successful.

*Over the past year we assisted 75 women and children, gifting them more than \$3000.00 in clothing and household items to help them start over.*

*We will continue in our efforts to stop violence and abuse against women and children, regardless of the challenges we may face. That is why we are here.*

*WiNGS - 'Women In Need Gaining Strength' is a social enterprise of SOWINS. What is Social Enterprise?" Social enterprises are businesses whose primary purpose is the common good. They use the methods and disciplines of business and the power of the marketplace to advance social, environmental and human justice.*

## *Volunteer Resources by Bethany Handfield, Volunteer Coordinator*

Since joining the SOWINS team in July of 2012, I have been amazed by the enthusiasm and dedication of our volunteers. It is evident that volunteers significantly impact the functioning of SOWINS programs, services and events.

Over the past year, we invited 59 new community members to volunteer with us. There are currently about 118 active volunteers who participate over the year depending on the project or event.

When I began with SOWINS I reached out to staff to assess their volunteer needs. We have kept in touch as their situations evolved. Here are a few of the success stories from these meetings:

- *Ellie and Lise gardening at the transition house.*
- *Working with Brenda to re-assign some of her volunteers and implement others.*
- *Introducing Cindy S. to Kimanna and having her assist with the mature women's group.*
- *Healing Monday's program (see below)*

SOWINS had many opportunities for volunteers through our partnerships with other community organizations over the past year. Some of our standouts include:

### *YWCA The Power of Being a Girl conference:*

*120 eleven year old girls were given messages of empowerment and self esteem. Samarpan and I each facilitated sections of this conference. Our volunteers really loved being a part of this project.*

### *South Okanagan Roller Derby Association:*

*volunteers ran the 50/50 draw and we have been asked back again for the bout in May.*

*SOEC:* *volunteers assist at suite level checking wristbands in trade for a donation to SOWINS*

*SOSVC:* *partnering for National Volunteer Week and co-hosting a volunteer appreciation party*

In March I started volunteer driven program called "Healing Mondays" as an alternative activity for SOWINS clients outside of counseling hours. The program had two parts: a "16 Steps to Empowerment" group (now defunct) and a rotation of facilitators covering topics such as art and healing, meditation, and breath work. This program is greatly enjoyed by our clients and a rewarding alternative for volunteers with limited time commitments.

We will be implementing a new volunteer training program, facilitated by Brenda Wasnock, in the coming months as well as Safe Home operator training program.

I have helped to increase our social media presence through Twitter and Facebook creating pages for SOWINS and WINGS. We also continue to reach out to the community through regular Constant Contact email. It has been very effective for volunteer recruitment and public awareness.

I would like to thank all of our volunteers for their hard work and dedication; especially our tireless Board of Directors whose volunteer hours are a major support. I would also like to thank all of the staff members who volunteer their time to our events and who were so gracious with helping me while I was 'learning the ropes' of my new position.

## *Volunteer Hours*

(approximate and not including board directors)

WINGS: 4500 hrs per year

Office Assistance: 1400 hrs per year

Bridging Program: 650 hours per year

Fundraising Gala: 350 hours

Share The Spirit: 605 hours

Holiday Parties: 100 hours

## *Fundraising & Public Relations, by Samarpan Faasse, Coordinator*

For more than 30 years South Okanagan Women in Need Society has provided exceptional programs and services to women and children experiencing abuse. As fundraising and public relations coordinator I am honoured to be the community's connection to this agency.

Our contract funding provides about 70% of our budget therefore we must raise the remaining 30% in order to deliver the services our contracts require. The many well established and special relationships we have with our caring donors and major funding partners are very encouraging. Through their support, we are able to maintain an excellent level of service for the women and children we serve.

The Women Front & Centre Gala was once again a major event for both fundraising and public relations. Our sponsor partnerships with many local businesses helped make the event a success. We are very grateful to Karen Davy, our connection to the headline sponsor Astral Media. They did an exemplary job of getting the word out from nominations through to ticket sales.

We made changes to the nominations process changing from 11 to 8 award categories. 27 nominations were received. With a new format for their task, our scoring panel of 6 did a great job of making their selections for the award recipients.

The theme this year was "Diamonds Are Forever", which came through in the dress of our guests and in the major auction/raffle items. Scotiabank gave matching funds of \$5000, as they have in the past and their team of women, were a great help at the event. Though more tickets were sold and more auction items were purchased, the event netted

about the same revenues as last year. The fundraising committee is talking about some changes for the 2014 gala and awards. Our interest is to maximize the funds raised, enhance the experience for the award recipients, and highlight the celebration of women.

Third party fundraisers are a great way to make connections and we had several this past year from fashion shows to tattoos for tots to a roller derby 50/50 to name a few. We are also on the list for RONA's popcorn fundraiser. People like their popcorn and the monthly contribution amount was a pleasant surprise! Two regular corporate supporters are Winners and Royal Lepage through

their shop for hope and garage sale respectively. SOWINS was also the recipient of the local Shopper's Drug Mart Tree of Life Campaign.

Moving the societal (human) reality of violence and abuse into the open is fundamental to SOWINS' educational role. Finding the language that people will hear and listen to takes patience and finesse. It is working, for whenever SOWINS is mentioned, I get a sense of respect and appreciation for the work that we do.

I am looking forward to the coming year. Working on new projects - Walk a Mile in Her Shoes Challenge and exploring Social Enterprise opportunities, is inspiring and rewarding.

I extend my thanks to all of our partners and supporters ... without you and your contributions we would be making decisions that adversely affect our clients. I also thank the board, our volunteers, and my colleagues, with your help and assistance I gained knowledge of and integrated into the culture of SOWINS. It is important work that we do, thanks for welcoming me to the team.

*SOWINS has a monthly presence in the Downtown Reporter section of the Herald with a column on topics of our choosing. Allison and Tova, who work on the piece do a great job, including images and often giving our story a full page.*

# *Specialized Services for Female Victims of Violence by Brenda E. Wasnock, RSW,*

*Program Coordinator*

*(SSVV Program is provided under subcontract to YMCA and Open Door Group through the Employment Program of BC (EPBC) of April 1, 2012*

Over the 2012-2013 fiscal year we served 69 clients - 17 were transitioned from the Bridging Program to the new Specialized Services for EPBC. On April 16, 2012 we started the new model and delivered five – ten week series through the fiscal year.

**SERVICES:** Since April of 2012 we have accommodated five changes in the delivery model as the EPBC shifted to better serve our clients. After initially having three staff we now have a full time staff in Penticton and a half time staff in Oliver/Osoyoos. We continue to work toward building participant numbers in order to provide more services to women and to generate more revenue for SOWINS to ensure we are breaking even on the contract.

As of March 4, 2012 we are able to provide and bill for counselling sessions – both group and one to one. We deliver these workshop based on SOWINS' model of Awareness, Acknowledgement and Action.

Workshops on recognizing, understanding and overcoming the impacts of abuse are intermingled with general life skills – communications, assertion, boundaries, anger/stress and time management. Informational workshops on substance abuse, dressing for success, self awareness and tenancy information are also integral components of the program. Critical thinking skills, including continuous learning, goals setting and problem solving, as well as those that encourage teamwork and build self esteem, round out the menu of activities.

*Clients are encouraged to attend as many workshop days as possible to increase the richness of their experience and to benefit and strengthen their individual process.*

While women are participating in the program we often refer and link them to other services in the community i.e. legal, medical and mental health services among others.

At present we provide the workshops and counselling over a ten week continually revolving schedule, provide one to one appointments and endeavour to maintain an open door policy i.e. drop in for a few minutes with a staff person.

**RESULTS:** Healing, along with increased energy, better health and communication skills, higher self esteem and confidence are direct results of these services. Some women are moving on to employment, others have been able to have in-depth assessments completed to address their mental or physical health issues, and still others have been able to complete their PWD applications with the help of the Women's centre.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION:** Along with Robert Bryce and Michou Szabo, we have been very happy to work with both Barb Davidson and Caroline Hart as our direct liaisons to the YMCA. It has also been helpful to work directly with Jenna and Ashley of the YMCA who are a wealth of information around Quality Assurance, ICM glitches and invoicing. In the south at Open Door Group, we have worked well with Naomi Bullock, Audrey Baron and Melanie Guza. Each has helped to inform, train and work with us to adapt to the new model and the continued changes within it.

Volunteers Delores and Peggy are an incredible asset – I could not carry this program without them. Cindi has also been a great addition and has excellent input during class.

## *Community Outreach Program by Sam (Sandra) Lucier, Coordinator & Counsellor*

*Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General Contract for this service, one staff 21 hours per week.*

Community Outreach provides supportive counselling, information, advocacy, support and accompaniment to clients using the court system and some government and community agencies, as well as drop in counselling.

Twenty-one hours per week allows us to provide services to women who require help navigating the legal system. One on one information sessions are provided, as well as court accompaniment, support in accessing Legal Aid, Duty Counsel and other services as necessary.

This has been another busy year. I am continuing to enjoy being a member of the outreach team, we face a lot of challenges in our attempts to help our clients, but we are a strong and committed group and work well together. The referrals from the Transition House are fairly steady as well as referrals from Mental Health, South Okanagan Victim's Assistance (SOVAS), Penticton and Area Women's Centre (PAWC) and SOWINS' Specialized Services for Female Victims of Violence program.

I see an average of 22 clients per month. I provide between 150 and 200 services per month including counselling, education, referrals, accompaniment and advocacy.

### **FUTURE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:**

One of our goals is to provide practical and educational opportunities for women who must self-represent due to financial or legal aid restrictions. The Family Law Act replaced the Family Relations Act on March 18, 2013- bringing significant changes that impact our clients.

### **SPECIAL RECOGNITION:**

In December 2012 we hosted West Coast Leaf in providing a workshop for community support workers on finances for women leaving abusive relationships. As well, since November of 2012 it has been our great privilege to have retired family law lawyer Robert Mayne come out twice a month to provide mentoring to women dealing with family law matters. He is a kind and knowledgeable man who has helped women not only to comprehend their rights but also to better understand the law.

### *An example of the emerging challenges facing our clients:*

*A young immigrant woman in an arranged marriage with a first generation Canadian was brought to SOWINS' office by a colleague. She is expected to adapt to Canadian culture in some ways but has been told that as an immigrant she has no legal rights and has been living with the family of her very abusive partner who has threatened to kill her if she leaves him. We are seeing more immigrant woman and the language barriers, cultural diversity and Immigration restrictions have been challenging and at times disturbing as we attempt to assist these women and their children in claiming their fundamental right to live in their home free of abuse.*

## *Children Who Witness Abuse Program by Elizabeth Gomes, Coordinator & Counsellor*

*Contract with Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General for this service*

**SERVICES:** This past year 241 children/youth received counselling services through one-on-one, group and/or family sessions. While some families self referred, many originated from community programs, schools, social workers, friends and/or previous clients, physicians and within our own agency. We continued to provide services to families from Summerland, Naramata, Kaleden and OK Falls in addition to Penticton. In order to best meet the needs of clients we often meet with children/youth at their school in a private room provided. School personnel in our district are very supportive of this as they understand that although the student may be missing some class time, in the long run, they are more likely to focus and succeed in class once they have participated in our intervention program. We have also provided transportation in town for several families who are working or for whom transportation is a real barrier.

**OUR MANDATE:** The mandate of the CWWA Program is to stop the intergenerational cycle of violence. Through art, play and educational resources (books, videos, workbooks), clients explore topics such as feelings, families, separation/divorce/loss, anger and conflicts, self esteem, bullying, abuse and family violence. During the sessions children experience a safe and neutral environment to talk about their families and how the abuse has affected them. Further, they learn the tools and skills necessary to cope with the common impacts of witnessing abuse; insecurities, poor social skills and problem-solving, aggression, withdrawal, anxiety, depression, problems in school, trust and relationship difficulties, fear of abandonment, risky behaviors, and many others. Several of the families we work with are also coping with issues such as mental health, drugs and alcohol, incarceration of one or both parents and at times, the death of a parent.

*We had an exciting Fall this year as we partnered with the YM/YWCA of the Central Okanagan and delivered Penticton's first ever "Power of Being a Girl" Conference at the Penticton Trade & Convention Centre.*

Custody and access now referred to as parenting time remains as a constant struggle for many of these families as well.

We had an exciting Fall this year as we partnered with the YM/YWCA of the Central Okanagan and delivered Penticton's first ever "Power of Being a Girl" Conference at the Penticton Convention Centre. Grade six girls were invited from the school district and the 100 seats were filled immediately. For an entire day, the girls took part in a motivational speaker presentation, an art project, cheerleading and a presentation on internet safety and being a good cyber citizen. It was a successful and energetic day for all!

Once again this year I co-facilitated the VIP (Violence is Preventable) Program at two of our elementary classes. Students and teachers have found this program to be of extreme value as students learn about feelings, families, anger, self esteem and abuse.

Finally, I would like to thank the volunteers who have helped within the program over this past year. Their input and assistance is sincerely appreciated. I look forward to another year of working with families, our community and fellow staff as we continue to empower women, children and families.

## *Mature Women's Support and Safe Homes Programs by Kimanna Banfield, Mature Women's Support Worker*

*Contract for this program is with BC Housing for one staff for 28 hours per week.*

*These programs offer support and services for women 50 years and older who have experienced or are at risk of abuse, threats or violence, or are currently in or have recently left an abusive situation.*

**SERVICES:** We provide individual counseling by appointment and on a drop-in basis; to offer information, advocacy, accompaniment, safety planning, safe home placement and support. We also have a weekly support group, staffed by a volunteer, to help the women build friendships and offer encouragement for each other.

This has been a busy year for the Out Reach Team. Referrals continue come from many sources, including the Hospital, Doctors, The Transition House and other community services from Osoyoos to Summerland, Princeton to Naramata. Many challenges are encountered in trying to help clients and to meet their needs.

The needs of women over 50 look very different from those of younger women leaving abusive relationships. They experience abuse not only from a spouse but from

*Many older women stay in abusive relationships, not because they don't want out, but because they feel trapped and dependant on their abuser.*

their adult children.

Older women tend to be financially dependant on their spouses, some never having worked outside the home. They may find it difficult to find or ask for help. Other barriers they face may include, loneliness, isolation, lack of family support, limited mobility, lack of transportation, fixed or lack of disposable income, lack of affordable housing. They may also be faced with a number of health issues that forces them to remain dependent.

### *The Story of One Woman's Courage*

" I did it, I did it, I did it, yeah me, I feel so good about myself...I am so proud of me. I did it. I stood up for myself. I stood up to my son. I'm free. Yeah me" !!!

These are the words of an 82 year old client who was being abused by her 44 year old son who had lived with her for the past 6 years.

He used crack, drank heavily and though he had no driver's license, took her car regularly and ultimately totaled it. He also resorted to hitting her when the money ran out.

He had many drug friends in the home and they used drugs there regularly.

She attended counseling and was informed of her rights and given support. She also saw our legal advocate. She was offered a safe home but refused that option.

At first she could not bring herself to ask him to leave, but she did eventually find the courage and asked.

Although he refused and stayed she was more empowered and the physical abuse subsided. One day she decided she was ready and she arranged for a new place to live. She moved, putting firm boundaries in place that he was not to know where she lived. She honored her boundaries and herself and is now happy, free, relieved and empowered to live her life free from abuse

## *Outreach Program by Sheila Robertson, Outreach Worker*

### *Services Provided Under Contract with BC Housing*

*This program provides: Individual Counseling; Safety Planning; Advocacy; Information about Abuse; Information about community/government programs; Referrals to other agencies and/or assistance.*

Each month the Outreach program receives about 15 requests for help from women. These requests are made by phone, email, dropping by our offices or referrals from other agencies. I respond to each request for help. Further appointments are made if their request falls within the program mandate otherwise I provide knowledge/referrals for other programs. Support for each woman may be short or long term, depending on their needs. Each month I have about 50 appointments and meet with 35 - 45 women.

The Outreach program coordinates a Christmas hamper program called Share The Spirit. We work with community partners to provide food hampers to families who have used the services of SOWINS in the past year. In 2012 over 120 families benefited from this program.

#### **TRENDS OVER THE PAST YEAR:**

1. I saw an increasing number of women living in violent relationships who were charged by the RCMP when they were defending themselves.
2. I provided more services to immigrant women. These women are from all over the world. Isolation, language barriers and lack of knowledge about Canadian law compounds the abuse they

have experienced. It is very difficult for these women to protect themselves and leave. It is also challenging to provide services because of the cultural/language barriers.

3. The Court system is making it more difficult for women to leave the area where their abusive partner/spouse resides, if they have children together. They have to prove to the court they have a valid reason to leave the area. This can be very challenging. These women feel they have lost their mobility rights which are entrenched under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. They feel they have lost their ability to protect themselves from further abuse.

I would like to encourage SOWINS to continue to try to secure funding for second stage housing and a full time intensive six week program for women who have been abused such as that provided by addiction treatment centers.

Thank you to all SOWINS staff for all the great work you do and a thank you to the board and volunteers for all your work and dedication. We all make a positive difference to the women and children we serve.

## *Second Stage Housing*

*For too many women and children, abuse is part of everyday life.*

*Second Stage Housing plays a significant role in stopping the violence and assisting in creating a safe future for women and children. Second Stage Housing provides transitional supports and housing to women, with or without children, who are leaving an abusive relationship. Second Stage Houses provide short-term, safe, affordable and independent housing and some services similar to those provided in transition houses. A stay at a Second Stage House is usually for 6 months to a year.*

## *Transition House Program by Melrose Tomlinson, Program Manager*

*Contract funding for this program is provided by BC Housing*

The Transition House provides respectful, safe, secure short term accommodation for women with children, and single women who are experiencing abuse or are at risk of abuse, threats or violence.

Women and their children can stay at the Transition House for up to thirty days. During this time they will have support to work through options and create plans for a safer future. This will include long term housing, safety planning, custody, finance, wellness and many other issues.

SOWINS has a professional team of Women Support Workers, Child, Youth and Family Support Workers and a Housekeeper, who make every effort to maintain a confidential, safe environment that will help women and children to recover from the traumatic effects of abuse.

The women who use the Transition House are empowered and encouraged to make decisions for their own lives. The service is open and staffed twenty four hours per day, every day of the year. Women can access the Transition House service at any time.

The Transition House operates a harm reduction model of service that is geared as much as possible, to each individual woman and her children. Women and children may be suffering multi-trauma and experiencing roadblocks to their safety and independence. There may be difficulties in accessing safe affordable housing, poverty, stability and protection for themselves and their children, access to recovery and wellness for themselves and their children. In order to help

in mitigating obstacles, staff will provide advocacy, referrals, accompaniment to community and other support services.

Women have reported that the support from the Transition House contributes to their success in maintaining safety and stability for themselves and their children. Women also reported that there is improvement to their health, self esteem, independence and more knowledge in keeping themselves safe. The safety level for the communities as a whole is also enhanced each time a woman accesses the service to keep herself and her children safe from an abuser.

SOWINS is working towards continually improving the Transition House service and have used resident's evaluation to make improvements and

changes. We also keep the safety of women and children central to our service. In addition, transition house staff sharpen their skills and knowledge through training and sharing good practices. The results are having awareness and flexibility to respond to changes and opportunities as they arise in the workplace.

We acknowledge and appreciate the support of individuals and organizations who have supported the

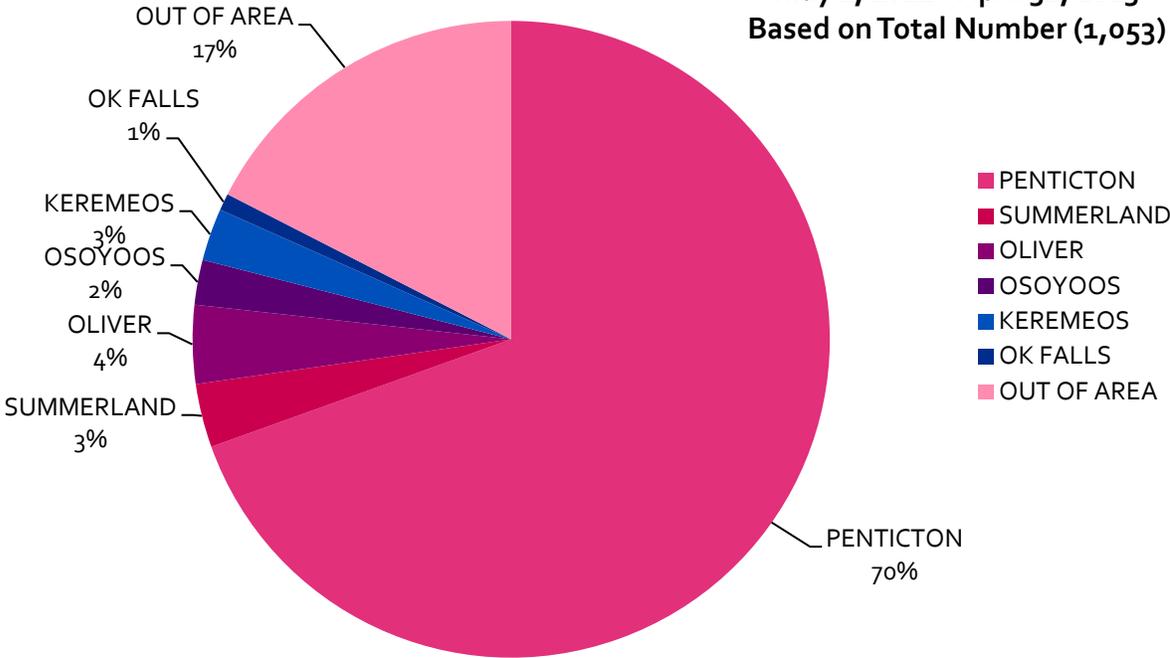
Transition House during the past year, Art Knapps, Murrays Pizza, Cobbs Bakery, Winners, Royal LePage, The Coffee Man, to name a few. We are also grateful to our Board of Directors, and thankful to our Executive Director, whose lead has had a significantly positive effect for a holistic Transition House service.

*Women have reported that the support they receive while at the Transition House contributes to their success in maintaining safety and stability for themselves and their children.*

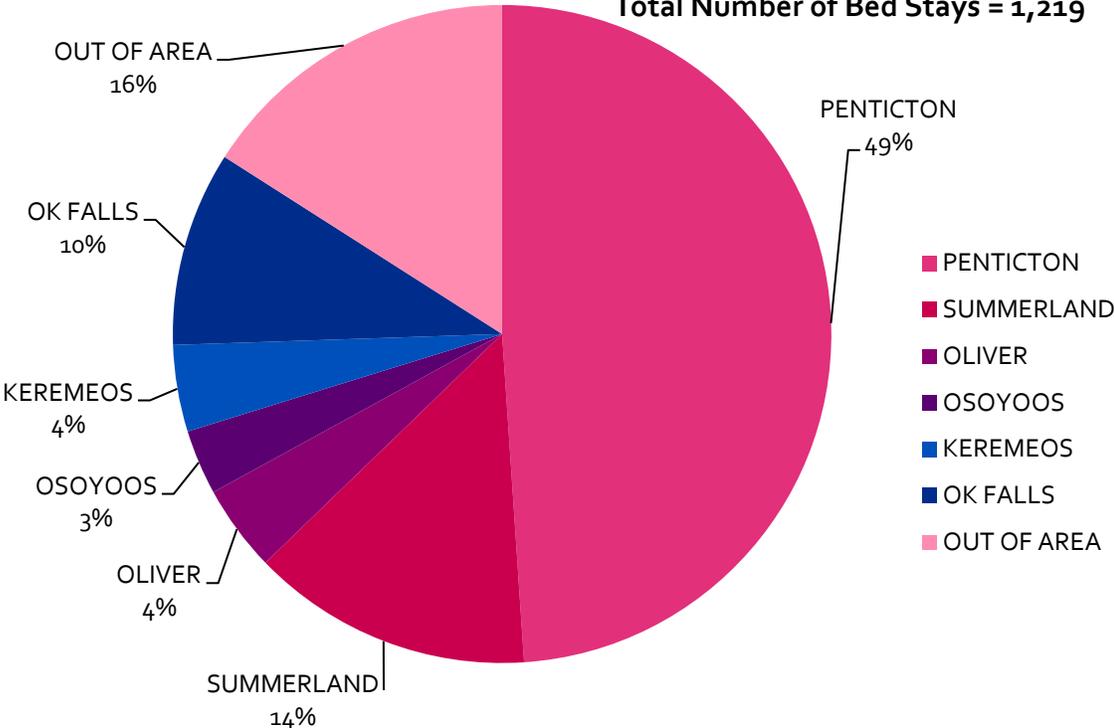
*Women also reported that there is improvement to their health, self esteem and independence.*

*They also have more knowledge of how to keep themselves and their children safe.*

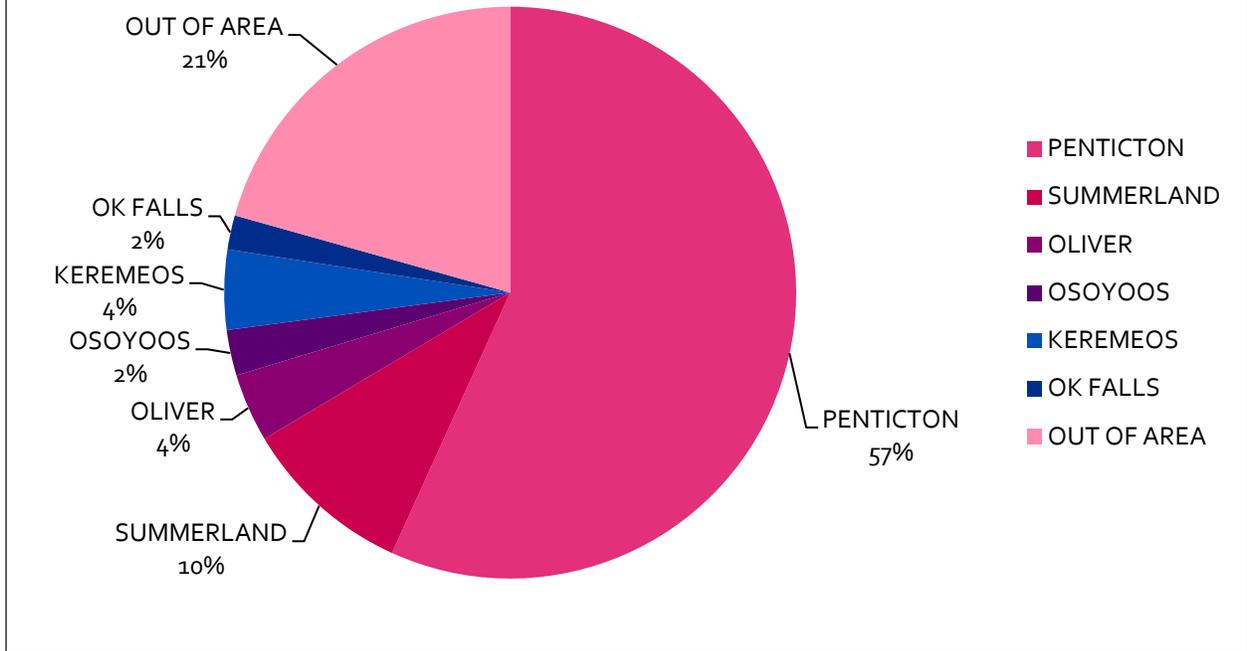
**Requests for Service  
May 1, 2012 - April 31, 2013  
Based on Total Number (1,053)**



**Residents (Children) in TH  
May 1, 2012 - April 31, 2013  
Based on Total Number of Children (94)  
Total Number of Bed Stays = 1,219**



**Residents (Women) In TH  
May 1, 2012 - April 31, 2013  
Based on Total Number (155)  
Total Number of Bed Stays = 2,297**



*Human Resources by Sharon Morrow, Admin / HR Manager*

SOWINS employs skilled and caring individuals who provide support and services to women and children who have experienced abuse. We also employ individuals who provide the structure and support to allow these services to take place.

Our human resources numbers have remained static over the past year.

**ACTIVE EMPLOYEES AT MARCH 31, 2013: 28 individuals**

Employee Classification	# of Exempt/Management	# in Bargaining Unit
Full Time	4	4
Part Time	3	10
Casual	none	7

All of the achievements discussed in this report are only possible because we have outstanding employees who, through their expertise, abilities and dedication, have made our Society the diversified support system that it is today.