



Annual Report

April 1st 2015 - March 31st 2016

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

Mother Theresa



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Annual General Report

A report on activities of the South Okanagan Women in Need Society for the period of April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

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

Board of Directors at March 31, 2016

Peggy Nicholson, President

Nicole Clark, Vice President

Kelly Lindsey, Treasurer

Maimie DeSilva, Secretary

Shelley Fritsen, Director

Dee Newman, Director

Shannon Stewart, Director

Cliff Bonnett, Interim Director

GOVERNANCE REPORT

At present, the Board of Directors of SOWINS is comprised of the Board Chair and seven Directors whose primary function is to provide sound governance in accordance and in compliance with: the BC Society Act, Imagine Canada Ethical Code and SOWINS' own Vision, Constitution, By-Laws, and code of Ethics and Values.

Our decisions align with the Strategic Plan and support the Executive Director through sound and informed governance. We do our work through the following committees: Policy, Finance, Fundraising and Public Relations, and Board Development.

Our Board continues to work very effectively with our Executive Director, Debbie Scarborough. We are impressed with her openness, passion and energy. Besides providing strong leadership to our organization, Debbie maintains a very high profile in our community. She liaises with and speaks to so many individuals and groups, thus increasing awareness of what we do and creating new connections to benefit our women and children.

Much of our focus as a Board this year has been to find suitable housing for our clients. We have looked at apartments and continue to seek out a suitable building for our women and children. In November, we became aware of a Request for Proposal from B.C. Housing for a new building. Board members helped interview both developers and architects for this proposal.

We also attended an information meeting held by the City of Penticton and B.C. Housing. We were not successful in our bid, but through the process we have learned how supportive BC Housing is

for the plight of our women and children and the need we have for Second Stage Housing.

We have also been looking for a building suitable for our Transition House that could house more clients and provide wheel chair accessibility (missing at our current Transition House).

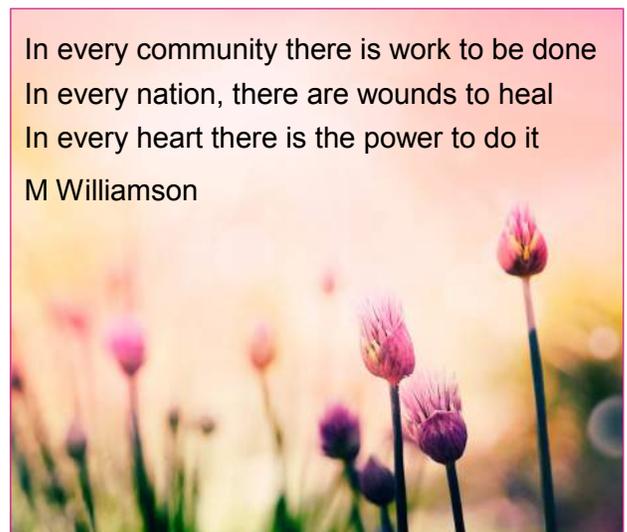
The key to the success of our society lies in the dedication of its outstanding staff, supportive volunteers and strong governance.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Debbie Scarborough for her stellar leadership. We recognize and thank our staff who have shown such leadership and collaborative effort this past year.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of our Board of Directors. We are a diverse group of people with a variety of backgrounds and strengths and it is a pleasure to work with you for the benefit of our organization.

Peggy Nicholson
SOWINS Board President

In every community there is work to be done
In every nation, there are wounds to heal
In every heart there is the power to do it
M Williamson



OPERATIONS REPORT

Hard to believe that another year has gone by. SOWINS has changed, evolved and grown with retirements, people moving out of area, and departures to new adventures. Our staff is a cohesive, strong, and passionate team that is not afraid to embrace change and new concepts. We are women that voice our thoughts, opinions and act on new programming and projects.

We are known to say “whatever we do we do in the best interest of the women and children we serve” however we will adjust our saying to all “individuals” we serve as we explore preventative and proactive programs such as offering parenting courses and working with all those individuals that wish to exit the sex trade in the South Okanagan.

To make real change we must include everyone not just women and children. We must work with potential perpetrators and prevent abuse from occurring rather than working only with survivors.

Community connections and collaboration: Our “ED coffee group” has grown to include: Oonkane Friendship Centre, Access Centre, Brain Injury, Okanagan Nations Transition House, Pathways, Birthright, Penticton & District Community Resources Society, South Okanagan Victims Assistance Society, John Howard Society, NOW Canada, Bereavement Resource Centre and Hospice, South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services and the Chamber of Commerce. We meet every Wednesday at 11am for an hour rotating between the locally owned coffee shops. Through collaboration we brainstorm workplace issues, joint training opportunities and events.

Being a member of “100 Women Who Care” has provided SOWINS a platform to discuss the topic of *abuse* and fundraise at the same time. There are four events a year, held at different businesses. At each event, I put my business card in for a draw as does every member. Three business cards are drawn, each organization or

business that is drawn will have a few minutes to talk about what we do and the 100 women strong members vote where the money goes at that event. Our card has been drawn twice and both times we were successful in getting voted to receive the money which is now \$4,000 an event.

Soup Sisters is also a year older and still having sold out events. I or a Board member speak at each event about how the women and children who receive this soup appreciate it so much and that it is more than just soup as it delivers a message that someone cares and supports them no matter where they are in their journey, living with the impact of abuse.

Our partnership with the Ministry for Children and Family Development MCFD, resulted in the approval of funding for a youth bed in our Transition House. This bed is a separate bedroom for a young woman who is 18 or younger that is homeless or at risk of homelessness. The contract will be up in September 2016 and we are hopeful that it will be continued.

Our partnership with OK College in Kelowna is resulting in SOWINS taking and supervising their Human Service Worker (HSW) practicum students. I continue to sit on their Program Advisory Committee, PAC for their HSW program which means a commitment of bi-annual meetings in Kelowna, where we discuss how the program is going with regards to meeting the needs of the practicum student, agencies and communities.

Sprott Shaw also continues to request SOWINS to supervise their Community Service Workers, (CSW) practicum students. I am requested to speak in their classes and this year, I was asked to be their guest speaker at their graduation ceremony at the Shatford Centre where I spoke to 200 graduates and guests.

United Way and SOWINS work together in addressing homelessness, abuse and the concept of fundraising for non-profit organizations.

To make real change we must include everyone not just women and children.

We must work with potential perpetrators and prevent abuse from occurring rather than working only with survivors.

OPERATIONS REPORT

We continue to assist United Way in their working sessions and commit and promote their annual fundraiser. This year United Way gave us a grant to assist us in the wage for a receptionist.

Wellness and Health: We continue to discuss the importance of wellness and balance for staff. Bethany has arranged and implemented the practice of yoga in the workplace at lunch with enough time left to eat. Bethany has also worked to provide art classes for staff as the WE (Wisdom and Energy) programs have done for our clients. I met with Scott Waldie the president of CSBT (benefit provider) to make accessibility to counseling easier and within our workplace. Staff now can request the counselor come to their workplace to meet with them. Our committee continues to explore ways in which to have fun at work or at work events.

Community Relations: I continue to speak at any workplace, or event to promote healthy relationships and programs if an individual needs assistance recognizing, understanding and overcoming the impact of abuse. When I am unable to make events or meetings staff have attended as my alternate. Having staff attend and speak provides the opportunity for staff to represent SOWINS as well as get to know other agencies, businesses and organizations. This allows me to be more available for staff and clients.

Operations and Benefits: After much research we did leave HBT (Health Benefit Trust) for a more effective and efficient Benefit provider CSBT (Community Services Benefit Trust) and this has worked out much better for staff. We now enjoy quick service, better benefits and the fast turnaround for reimbursement. With the president Scott living in Penticton we are able to meet and have questions and concerns dealt with quickly.

Projects on the GO: A year has passed since we sent in a Letter of Intent for the "Exiting the Sex Trade" 5 year project, attended meetings in Vancouver twice (funded by the National Crime Prevention and Public Safety Canada),

successfully submitted a proposal to Ottawa, to find ourselves still waiting for an answer almost a year later.

We were successful in a \$25,000 grant project where we will be working with women and girls entrenched in the sex trade through the summer months. The grant comes from Civil Forfeiture Grant and will allow us the opportunity to drive around and provide services, birth control, condoms, nourishment, referrals and support to the women and children. This will get the footing in place for the "exiting the sex trade" project if we are successful with that. This summer project will run from end of June to end of August with the final report issued mid-September.

Benjamin Moore and Curtis did a wonderful job painting the complete inside of the Transition House, giving it a total warm face lift. Thanks to one of our valued volunteers we now have some very nice art work on the walls. We have purged all our old cloth couches and chairs and we now have all leather and faux leather furniture which is much easier to clean and looks so much better.

BC Housing and SOWINS continue to work on securing a larger and wheelchair accessible Transition House. BC Housing put in an offer to purchase a property on Warren Ave however the receivers refused to counter so it remains vacant. BC Housing will continue to monitor that property yet being open for any other properties.

We applied and received \$10,000 Seed Grant money from CMHC to assist in our preparation and assessment to purchase or build, own and operate a property for Second Stage Housing. We are excited to put this to use and as soon as we have a property we will utilize this funding. We made an offer on an apartment building on Sydney however it did not pass the building inspection.

In late 2015 the City of Penticton partnered with BC Housing in issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to build Safe Affordable Housing.

OPERATIONS REPORT

SOWINS was approached by four different Development Firms and after interviewing all four, chose Makola Development Services. Together we interviewed three architects and chose Phil MacDonald. We worked for months on putting together an amazing strong proposal for a 44 unit apt building that would have 11 Second Stage Housing units on the top floor – the first Second Stage Housing in South Okanagan. In early May we were told that we were unsuccessful in our bid and that it would be going to Penticton and District Community Resources Society PDCRS, who are already housing providers to a large demographic as well as they joined with Catalyst who is bringing capital to the 66 unit building project. We are back to looking at properties around Penticton that SOWINS will own and operate as South Okanagan's first Second Stage Housing for women and children leaving abuse.

Author Lorrie Forde donated to SOWINS her self-care workbook and top seller "Really Good F Words" (freedom, fun, friends...) that were paid for by sponsors so that the books could go to the women who need it. Women have told us that the book has been such a wonderful tool in assisting them in working through the impacts of abuse.

Operations Wrap Up: We had aimed for everyone to have an accurate job description, to have their first budget, and a performance evaluation before the end of 2015. All were accomplished – thanks to a great team effort as performance evaluations were by supervisor, self, and co-workers and budgets were a group effort led by Sharon.

Renovations at TH: We applied for and received a \$10,000 grant to address a security camera issue and a leak into the downstairs of the Transition House. When the renovation began we found mold and water damage that was unforeseen. After a discussion with Sairoz our funder at BC Housing she agreed to cover the additional cost of approximately \$7,000.

The season of giving and thanks: SOWINS was thrilled to have another year of Christmas festivities (party, decorating cookies, Christmas

dinner, Santa, gifts and a gift shop for children to pick out gifts for their mom or care provider) all sponsored by Vanilla Pod and Poplar Grove Winery staff. Board and staff volunteered to make the event extra special for well over a hundred women and children that accessed our services throughout the year. Mark's Workwear contacted us to sponsor Christmas at the Transition House which meant, tree and decorations, stockings and filling, gifts, Christmas turkey and trimmings. Our long standing "Share the Spirit" was another successful event, thanks to staff, local businesses, individuals and families.

SOWINS's first receptionist: For the first time in SOWINS 35 year history we have a full time receptionist. United Way assisted us in moving this forward, providing us with a grant for \$10,000. Veronica has exceeded our expectations being the window to our organization, and the women have told us that they feel important and comfortable as she greets them with warmth, a smile, soup, food, and toiletries. Veronica creates that safety for those children, women, and also for staff as she is able to assess, diffuse and refer when necessary. Veronica has very quickly become a critical part of our team.

Collaboration is important outside and equally within our organization. We hosted our first MIND MAPPING where the history of SOWINS was shared, updates on what we are involved in regarding RFPs, grants, and projects. It was the perfect opportunity for everyone to mix and mingle getting to know each other as we have a number of programs and Transition House being the largest, is off site.

We had our second MIND MAPPING in May. As we continue to change and grow we are reminded daily by those we serve, that we are moving in the right direction. I continue to feel privileged to be a part of an epic team as we evolve and change striving to be the best we can be to those we serve. Thank you.

Debbie Scarborough
Executive Director

FUNDRAISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

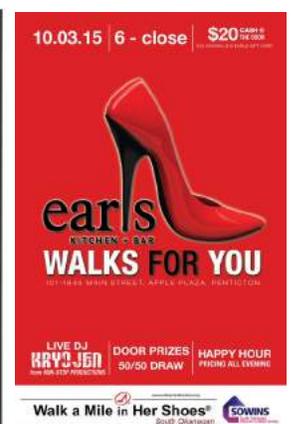
Fundraising and Public Relations are two ways that SOWINS interacts with our community to share the important story of our Society and the women and families we strive to serve. Over 2015/16 this story was Safe, Affordable 2nd Stage Housing. Many women and families return to unsafe living conditions due to a lack of alternatives places to live and thrive. Sometimes the only choice they see is to return to their abuser or other unsafe living condition. With 2nd Stage Housing, SOWINS would offer an alternative where women and families would have the time and space to make real changes in their lives after they left the Transition House or Safe Home.

In 2015 we had two fundraisers to support this project: the Okanagan Falls Hotel Bike Raffle and the 2nd Annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® South Okanagan, which is also our major fundraiser. The Ok Fall Hotel Bike Raffle raised \$7000 in funds and also awareness about our programs and services. We were engaged at many locations throughout the South Okanagan and reached many community members who had not heard about SOWINS before and the work that we do.

Held on October 8th 2015, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® South Okanagan raised over \$37,000 with the support of 60 participants and a \$10,000 donation from the Penticton Foundry. This annual fundraising event supports SOWINS' work to break the cycle of gender-based and domestic violence. Although abuse is a very serious matter, this light-hearted event invites registered participants to take a stand and walk for awareness and change. We invite you to join us at our 2016 event on July 8th at Gyro Park in Penticton. It is a family friendly affair and everyone is welcome to participate and dress up.

3rd Party Fundraising is another way that our community can meaningfully engage with SOWINS. Over 2015/2016 we had several excellent 3rd Party events:

- Ironwoman's Golf Tournament: Gayle Bukowski and the ladies from Twin Lakes Golf hosted the 2nd annual tournament and raised over \$11,000 with \$5,500 coming from an anonymous donor. Their next event is on July 22nd, 2016.
- Earl's Walks for You: Diane Fru and the team from Earls raised \$1,185 in support of Walk a Mile in Her Shoes and our 2nd Stage Housing. The 2nd annual Earls Walks for You will be on June 10th, 2016.
- Lip Sync @ The Mug: Lisa Laflamme organized the first ever lip syncing competition at the Copper Mug in March 2016. This fun event raised \$1362 for SOWINS as well as donations of toilet paper, pillows and baby products. The event continued again in May.
- Quota: The Annual Pancake Breakfast on Canada Day has been a great support to SOWINS.



INNOVATIVE
EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

raising funds and awareness for **SOWINS** South Okanagan Women In Need Society *changing change*

...presents...

Lip sync challenge @ the Mug
Wednesday starting May 4th - Finals June 1st

FUNDRAISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Grants make up another large support for our programs, services, and projects. They can supply necessary extras to support the women and families that we serve. Over the 2015/16 grant cycle we received support from:

- BCAA's Car Seat Program. This program provides necessary infant to youth car seats to ensure that they are protected when travelling.
- Penticton & District Community Arts Council, Opus Art Supplies, Penticton Art Gallery, Community Foundation South Okanagan/ Thea Haubrich Legacy Fund, and individual donors for art supplies, venue rentals and instructor honorariums for the client beloved WE: Inspire project.
- United Way has been an amazing help to SOWINS through their Days of Caring project and also with the grant that brought SOWINS our amazing receptionist Veronica Mora. Veronica started with SOWINS in February

2016 and it has been a game changer for our organization. She has already become an invaluable member of our team and an incredible support for clients and the public.

- Canadian Mortgage & Housing Cooperation donated \$10,000 towards our 2nd Stage Housing project through their CMHC SEED funding grant.
- BC Housing donated \$10,000 from their Small Capital Grant project for repairs on our Transition House.

I would like to take this time to thank all of the individuals, social clubs, church groups, small business, and corporate donors who have contributed goods and funds over the past year to SOWINS and the women and families that we serve.

Bethany Handfield
Coordinator of Marketing & Volunteers



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

Provided under contract to BC Ministry of Justice

Community Outreach provides services to adult women who have experienced, or are at risk of abuse, threats, or violence. These services include information, advocacy, supportive counselling, and support and accompaniment to clients using the family court system, as well as some community and government agencies. Community Outreach also provides drop in counselling to residents of Penticton and the surrounding area.

Community Outreach saw an average of 20 clients per month over the past year, and provides an average of 100 plus services each month including counselling, referrals, education, accompaniment and advocacy. Women are referred from the Transition House and other SOWINS programs, South Okanagan Victim's Assistance (SOVAS), Penticton and Area Access Centre, Mental Health, Interior Health and the Multicultural Society, as well as provincial ministries.

One on one information sessions are provided, as well as court accompaniment, support in accessing Legal Aid, Duty Counsel and other services as necessary. Community Outreach assists women with applications for Housing, Ministry of Employment and Development, Immigration, and other Community Agency applications/referrals. The program endeavors to meet a woman where she is at and to assist by providing information and education so she can make informed decisions that will best meet her needs. Community Outreach support is provided at the outreach office, the Transition House, and in Summerland and Oliver by appointment.

Val McKinnon
Coordinator & Counselor

CHILDREN WHO WITNESS ABUSE PROGRAM

Provided under contract to BC Ministry of Justice

Our Mandate

The mandate of the CWWA Program is to stop the intergenerational cycle of violence. Through art, play, and other educational resource's children and youth are supported to discuss and share about their feelings, families, divorce and separation, anger and abuse.

Services

The sessions are either at SOWINS, or at the schools. The children and youth can work through their issues in a safe and neutral environment. They learn tools and skills to cope with the impacts of witnessing abuse.

I also meet with the parents and guardians and support them in their understanding on how violence has affected their children.

I co-facilitate the VIP (Violence Is Preventable) Program at various elementary classes. Students and teachers have found this program to be of great value as students learn about feelings, families, self-esteem and abuse.

I also run a number of groups for children and youth. During these groups children and youth get to share their stories and experiences with each other. They learn they are not alone and can express themselves freely without judgment.

Finally, I would like to thank the volunteers who have helped us throughout the years. Their input and assistance is sincerely appreciated. I look forward to another year. We have so many plans and ideas on how we can continue to support and empower the women and children we work with.

Erica Markus-Pawliuk
A/CWWA Coordinator/Counsellor

KEREMEOS & MATURE WOMEN SAFE HOME PROGRAM

Provided under contract to BC Housing - Women's Transition Housing & Support Program

Services Provided:

- The Safe Home program received 153 referrals to service over the past year; 103 were abuse related, 49 were homelessness, and 1 was unknown.
- 14 women and 9 children stayed in Safe Homes over the past fiscal year.
- 71 women who were accepted into the program decided not to access a safe home, these women went to the transition house instead, made other arrangements, left the community, or stayed with family/friends.
- 51 women were referred to other services due to mental health (11), substance misuse (11), combination mental health and substance use (9), safety concerns (8), chronic homelessness (7), pets (2), no space (2), and mobility issues (1).
- For women who were not appropriate for placement in a safe home, the Safe Home Coordinator worked with the clients to provide support, safety planning, resources, and referrals to the appropriate services.

Staff

- Priscilla took a temporary leave of absence as coordinator in February 2016 to finish her MA Thesis, at which time Katie W. became the Acting Safe Home Coordinator for 3 months. Priscilla extended her leave of absence for an additional 3 months. Jennifer T was the successful applicant and is the Acting Safe Home Coordinator until Aug 16, 2016. While on leave from this position, Priscilla has been, and will continue to be available for training and consultation.
- Safe Home Coordinator has an office located at the Transition House and is available by cell phone 24/7 for client and Safe Home Operator support.
- Mature Women Outreach worker has an office at the Admin Office and is on call 24/7
- Safe Home Coordinator provides support for Safe Home Operators, screens and matched clients with safe homes, organizes training for

Safe Home Operators and recruits, screens, and trains new Safe Home Operators.

Safe Homes

- We currently have 4 safe homes in operation in Penticton (1), Summerland (1), Oliver (1), and Okanagan Falls (1).
- Penticton: Single woman, wheelchair accessible, pet friendly, on bus route.
- Summerland: Woman and up to 3 children, walker accessible, walking distance to town, on bus route, own bathroom, shared kitchen.
- Oliver: Single mature woman, limited mobility, country setting.
- Okanagan Falls: Single woman, limited mobility, country setting .

Highlights

- Thanks to the indication of Katie we officially have a Safe Home in Penticton as of May 19th 2016. This safe home is also our first pet friendly and wheelchair accessible.
- We currently have two other Safe Homes in the process of being certified. One of these homes is in Penticton, the other is in Okanagan Falls, and both homes are pet friendly.

Results

Safe Home provide women and children a safe place to relax, move forward, and heal after leaving abusive situations.

Special Thanks!

We would like to acknowledge the great work that our Safe Home Operators are due. Safe Home Operators do this work because they care without recognition from the outside world. These compassionate volunteers open their homes to complete strangers. The work our Safe Home Operators do is truly amazing and can make all the difference for a women leaving an abusive situation. Thank you!

Priscilla Healey,
Safe Home Coordinator

KEREMEOS & MATURE WOMEN SAFE HOME PROGRAM

The Mature Women and Safe Home Support program offers services to women over the age of 50. In the past year an average of 26 women were seen per month for a total of 310 women over the year. With 14 women and 9 children having stayed in the Safe Homes.

The services provided are:

- One on one supportive counselling, by appointment or drop-ins.
- Safe, Temporary, short term shelter in a Safe Home.
- Sharing information and referrals to other support services available in our community.
- Advocacy, safety planning and accompaniment when needed.

Services Provided:

One staff member allotted 21 hours per week to work with clients.

Mature Women's Issues:

In working with elderly women it is important to keep in mind the generation they were raised in and their belief systems from those times. Most were raised to serve their men and to be nice and keep the peace. After a lifetime of abuse many women find they no longer can tolerate the abuse and leave. Most have never worked outside the home so they are financially dependent on their partners. Many women have never lived on their own and are dealing with a lot of fears and guilt at leaving their partners. Others are being abused by adult children who may be addicts and take their money or vehicles. There can be lots of yelling and verbal abuse as well. Most women of older generations are at a loss on how to deal with these adult children.

Many health issues come up in the later years as well, which can add to the stress of being on your

own and create more financial issues for them. Transportation can be a difficult issue as well. Many adult children may not live close by so women have no or little help from family members. Women who are trying to survive on disability find it is not enough to pay the rent never mind monthly expenses, food or medical requirements. Second stage housing would be a tremendous help for these women. Isolation and loneliness is a large issue as most women have spent a lifetime looking after others and staying at home. With the way these women have been raised and lived their lives they are not used to asking or accepting help from others.

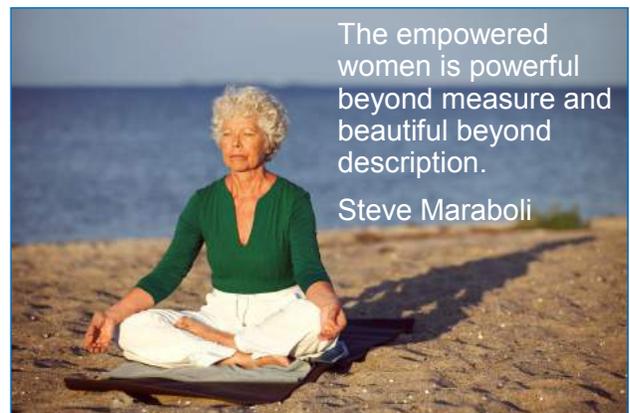
Conclusion:

With all of these barriers, many women stay in the abusive relationship because they don't see a way out. Those that do find the courage to leave require a lot of support to make the transition into a new life.

Many tell me they would never leave without the support of SOWINS. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of our society and as their numbers continue to increase, we can expect the need for this program to continue to rise. It plays a vital part in enhancing the lives of our seniors.

Donna Burtwell

Mature Women & Safe Home Support Worker



The empowered women is powerful beyond measure and beautiful beyond description.

Steve Maraboli

WOMEN'S OUTREACH PROGRAM

Provided under contract to BC Housing & Women's Transition House Support Program

Services Provided:

- Individual counseling
- Information about abuse
- Safety planning
- Advocacy
- Referrals
- Disability applications
- Assistance completing other applications/forms
- Information about other resources/programs

Each month the Outreach program receives about **15 requests** for services. Woman needing support contact us by phone, email or dropping by our offices. Referrals are also received through other agencies. I respond to each request for help, usually the day I receive it. Each month I have about **50 appointments with about 35 – 45 individual women**. This program is always very busy.

The Outreach program is also responsible for coordinating our Christmas Hamper program called **Share The Spirit**. We work with community partners to provide hampers to families who have used the services of SOWINS in the past year. In 2015 over **150 families benefited** from this program.

Being a part of the SOWINS organization for the past 22 years has provided me with a great deal of insight into the many difficulties faced by women wanting to leave, or who have left an abusive relationship. What I have come to understand is the need for both short and long term support. Lots of factors affect how quickly women can overcome the impact of abuse and unfortunately some never do.

Long term support is more likely when a woman:

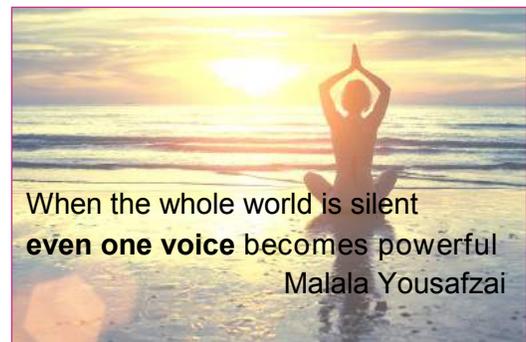
- Has been abused for many years, some since birth.
- Has been in a chronic cycle of abuse.

- Has very negative thoughts and feelings about themselves and their ability to change their situation.
- Has an abusive ex-husband/partner who continues an ongoing campaign of abuse long after she has left. He may do things like stalk her, delay legal processes, use their children, or in some way try to negatively impact the positive steps she is taking to change her situation.
- Does not have safe affordable housing.
- Does not have a support system or a healthy support system like family or friends.
- Has major physical, mental or emotional health issues.
- Struggles with addictions.
- Lacks marketable skills and financial resources.

I would like to encourage SOWINS to continue to work towards educating others about the need for long term support by trying to secure second stage housing, developing a 6 week intensive holistic program for women who have experienced abuse such as that provided by addiction centers and for long term Outreach support.

Thank you to all SOWINS staff for the great work they do. Thank you to the board and volunteers, we could not accomplish what we do without you.

Sheila Robertson
Outreach Program



TRANSITION HOUSE PROGRAM

Provided under contract to BC Housing, Women's Transition House & Support Program

This past fiscal year has been an amazing year with many changes. In the later part of the year a new position was created within the Transition House wherein the staff have a key person to connect with for support and direction.

The Senior Women Support worker has taken on many of the responsibilities of the previous Transition House Manager. The Senior Women Support Worker is a member of the Scheduling Committee, the Hiring Committee and is responsible for training new staff. The Scheduling Committee continues to manage the staff schedule and have done so with great success. Throughout the year there has been several new Casual On Call staff who have joined the SOWINS Transition House Team. The Hiring Committee reviews resumes and interviews potential applicants. The Hiring and Interviewing is comprised of Transition House Program staff.

The Women Support Workers meet every other week for a staff meeting that is generated with topics of their interest and to gain new information from the ED and or guest speakers. On alternate weeks the Transition House team meets for Case Reviews, to discuss current clients, concerns, and how staff can support each woman to have positive outcomes. Having the Case Reviews has been particularly beneficial to staff because of the opportunity to freely speak and engage with each other without the concern of clients notes being subpoenaed for court purposes. Throughout the year staff have attended training modules that focus on Best Practices and Trauma Informed Practice. Each staff member comes with their own gifts and skills that are individual and diverse. As the year has progressed the

Transition House team has become cohesive and rich in its ability to make decisions, and grow.

The birth of an Extended Stay Bed came about over the past year. A woman had accessed services through the Transition House Program, who had significant trauma, anxiety and panic. It became very apparent that with her complex issues she was not able to have a 30 day stay that would result in a positive outcome, so the consideration of an Extended Stay Bed was presented to staff, who embraced the idea. The woman continues to contact the Transition House regularly to update staff and for emotional support when she is in crises. The woman painted a beautiful picture that represents her life through her eyes, and recently presented it to the Transition House.



Picture presented by Transition House client to
Peggy Nicholson, Board President

TRANSITION HOUSE PROGRAM

Throughout the busy year, the Transition House program has provided supportive services to 139 women and 55 children. Of particular interest is the opening of a Youth Bed for female youth who are at risk. The Youth Bedroom has been beautifully furnished by donors. Thank you to the donors and other agencies who have partnered with the Transition House Program to provide a safe option for at risk Youth.

The Transition House has enjoyed having volunteers who have come into the house and organized, cleaned up, picked up, and culled donations that have been awarded to the house. We recognize the uniqueness of each of the volunteers and their passion to give to their community and SOWINS.

Upgrading to the Transition House premises has continued throughout the year. This past year all of the house was freshly painted with the exception of the new office and Youth bedroom. The house continually has paintings hung and rehung or re-arranged throughout the house. Like the Transition House program that is ever evolving and changing according to the needs of the women we service so it seems that the appearance of the house changes to reflect inspiration, and information.

Irene J
Senior Women Support worker



Youth Bed at the Transition House

Crisis Calls
2024



4149

Bed Stays



2617
women



1532
children

Turned Away due
to over capacity

847



HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

Provided under contract to BC Housing

The Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) focusses on homelessness or the threat of homelessness for women who have experienced violence or are at risk of violence. Additional criteria is that women are paying more than 30% of their income for housing. Funded by BC Housing, the program launched in January 2015 and has been successfully operating for over one year now. Referrals originate from both SOWINS in-house programs as well as community agencies such as SOVAS, Access Centre and SOSBIS.

Clients are required to find their own rental accommodation and once an application is received, including a copy of the client's rental agreement, a committee at SOWINS meets to assess the financial need. Most will receive \$450 per month up to 6 months however some require assistance only for damage deposits or utility arrears. In those cases they are granted "one-time only" supplements to assist them in moving forward.

Bi-monthly meetings are set with clients to review personal goals they have identified and to

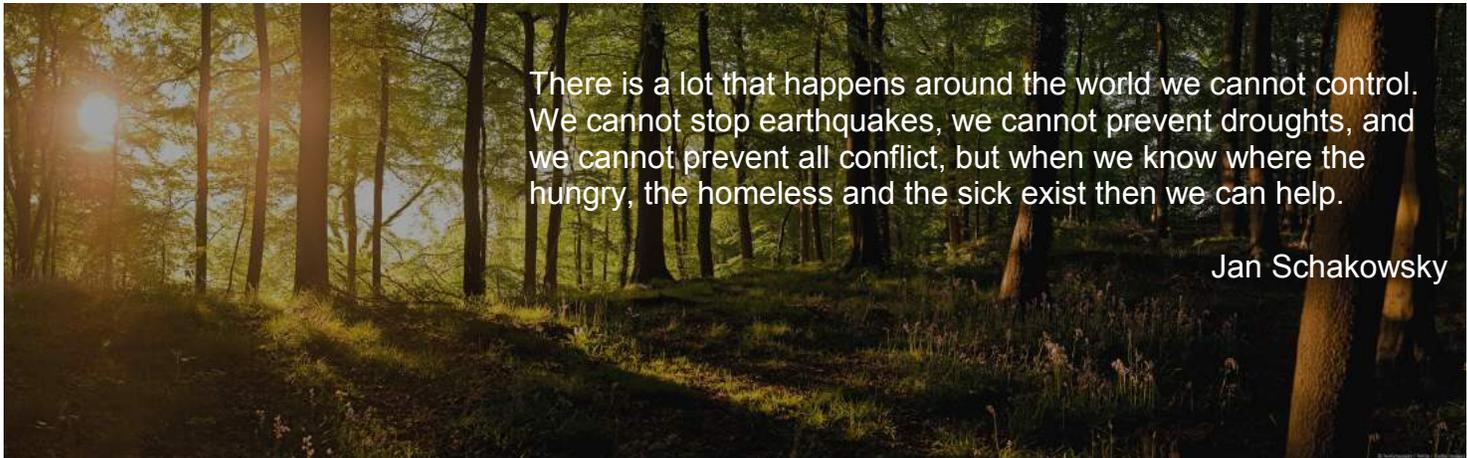
assist them in achieving their desired goals which can include; applying for PWD, applying for employment or pre-employment programs, and/or finding more affordable accommodations. Through case planning, the Outreach Worker and client work towards being able to sustain safe, affordable housing when their supplements conclude.

This past fiscal year, thirty women received rental supplements and five were assisted with one-time only payments. As the HPP Outreach Worker, it is so rewarding to see the difference this program has on their lives. Many of them state they would not have been able to leave their abusive partner, have the confidence and mental wellness to re-enter the work force or to finally have stable, safe and affordable housing without the HPP. This program assists women to empower themselves in making life long changes towards independence and wellness.

I am so grateful to work with these women!

Liz Gomes

Homeless Prevention Program



There is a lot that happens around the world we cannot control. We cannot stop earthquakes, we cannot prevent droughts, and we cannot prevent all conflict, but when we know where the hungry, the homeless and the sick exist then we can help.

Jan Schakowsky

SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR FEMALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Service provided under subcontract to YMCA and Open Door Group

Services Provided:

- Over the 2015-16 fiscal year we had 65 referrals and served 77 clients.
- Presently we have 32 active participants and have completed our work with 45 others.
- We offer a range of services from one to one counselling to group work including counseling, healing, life skills, employment readiness skills, and referral to community resources. We deliver these workshops based on our SOWINS model of Awareness, Acknowledgement and Action. Clients are encouraged to attend as many days as possible to increase the richness of their experience.
- We provide six week workshops with a week in between for intake and preparation as well as personal Counselling (1 to 1).

We now provide clients with workshop content 3 weeks at a time so they can be in charge of their own learning. (i.e., look ahead, know what to expect, reduce anxiety, miss a day, etc.)

To reduce barriers to accessing services Priscilla has secured a space in Osoyoos to meet with Open Door Clients who are not able to travel to Penticton.

SOWINS and WORK BC (YMCA and ODG) have developed a positive working relationship with open communication.

Workshop facilitators are committed to professional development and have attended a number of training courses and workshops throughout the year.

System of Service Delivery

Coordinator / Facilitator/ Counsellor	Jun 1, 2015	Priscilla Healey	25 hrs / week
Counsellor	Ongoing	Rhea R	4+ hrs / week
Facilitator	Jan 15, 2015	Donna Burtwell	14 hrs / week

Highlights

Open Door Group extended contract with SOWINS until 2019.

We are currently in the process of updating workshop content and the restructuring of the program. Brenda did an amazing job developing and implementing the program. We are building on the Awareness Acknowledgement and Action model with an additional emphasis on strengths, self-care, and positive well-being in every workshop

Staff Professional Development

Priscilla
-Little Warriors -Vicarious Trauma: Vikki Reynolds -Collaborative Ending Violence Conference (2.5 days) -Dessert Sun/SOVAS Practice Training (2 days)
Donna
-Trauma Informed Practice (2 days) -Mental Health First Aid -Basic Food Safe -Conflict Resolution Skills
Rhea
-Ongoing through Desert Sun and Private Practice -Organized: Dessert Sun/SOVAS Practice Training (2 days)

SPECIALIZED SERVICES FOR FEMALE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

More Changes to Come

- The Employment Services Coordinator is working with a volunteer to update contact and add in more hands on exercises, with a focus on practicing the skills learned in workshop.
- We were successful in moving to a block funded model from the YMCA and have found it to be much better for the clients, the Coordination of the services and for SOWINS fiscally.
- It would still be a goal of ours to extend the length of the workshop series – 8 weeks would be ideal and we could add back some of the workshops that, as a result of Government changes, have been dropped since we had to move away from the Bridging 12 week model in 2012.

Results

Healing, along with higher self-esteem and confidence, increased energy, better health, self-care and communication skills, are the direct results of these services. Some women are moving on to employment, others have been able to go to go back to school, go to needed treatment, 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 Access centre.

Special Recognitions

Staff who have covered holidays / Volunteers / Practicum Students

- Over the past year Priscilla and Donna been flexible in their schedules and have been able to cover each other for training, holidays, and sick days with no disruption in services.
- Our weekly volunteer Delores has been an incredible asset. Her commitment to 3 hours every Wednesday is very much appreciated. Delores keeps all the curriculum materials, sign in sheets and file preparation ready for us.
- Val H has been a valuable resource to the program. She has been working to update course content using evidence based peer

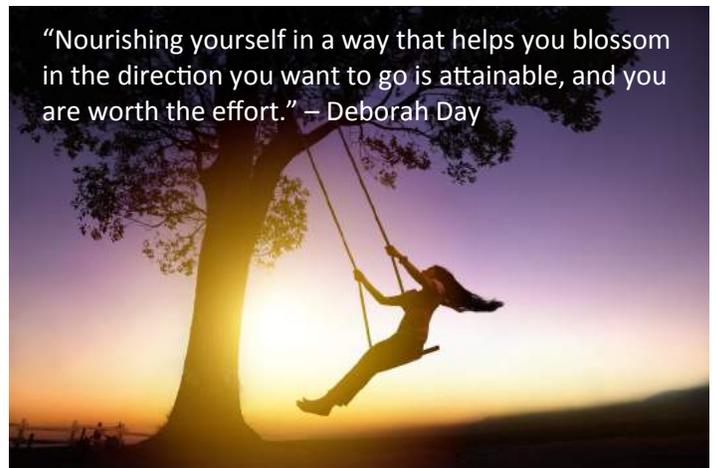
review material. Her commitment to providing clients with the best, up to date materials has been greatly appreciated.

- Donna Burtwell completed her Professional Counselling Certification in June 2015. She has been an amazing asset throughout the past full year – Since April of 2014 Donna has been volunteering 1 to 3 days per week every week, completing her numerous required practicum hours, applying for and obtaining the 7 hour Facilitation position and has been doing both Admin and Facilitation tasks for the last year as a paid staff member.
- Over the last year we have had 4 practicum students participate in the Employment Services Program. Last summer we had 2 students from Sprott Shaw's Human Services program and 2 from the 2nd year Human Service Worker program at Okanagan College – all of these students were exceptional and seemed to enjoy their immersion in SOWINS – from workshops to Transition House they all learned a great deal.
- Students always bring energy and enthusiasm with them while enriching the program.

A special thank you to all of them!

Priscilla Healey,
Specialized Employment Service Coordinator

“Nourishing yourself in a way that helps you blossom in the direction you want to go is attainable, and you are worth the effort.” – Deborah Day



HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources at March 31, 2016:

Administration:

Debbie Scarborough, Executive Director
Sharon Morrow, Executive Assistant

Dawn Merritt, Administrative Supervisor
Bethany Handfield, Marketing & Volunteer
Coordinator

Veronica Mora, Receptionist
Margaret S, Operations Policy Writer

Outreach:

Employment Specialized Services
Donna B
Priscilla H
Rhea R

A/Children Who Witness Abuse Program

Coordinator
Erica M

Community Outreach Program

Val M

A/Homeless Prevention Program

Liz G

Mature Women / Safe Home Support

Donna B

Outreach Program

Sheila R

A/Safe Home Coordinator

Katie W / Jennifer T

WE Coordinator

Bethany H

Transition House / Youth Bed :

Dawn A
Shannon B
Irene J
Diane K
Tamra L
Bonnie M
Judith R
Rhea R
Rona S
Staci D
Sharlene D
Jael R
Tara J
Basia P
Jennifer T
Heather T
Gwen W
Katie W
Tracy W

31 individuals

9 Full Time; 10 Part Time ; 12 Casual

On LTD: 2 Full Time TH Workers

Terminated employment with SOWINS over the
past year:

3 Exempt – 2 FT; 1 RPT

3 Union – 1 FT; 1 RPT; 1 Casual



DONATIONS AND FUNDING

On behalf of The South Okanagan Women in Need Society and the women, youth and children we serve, we would like to express our sincere thanks to our funders, partners, local organizations, community businesses and individuals that have supported us through the year. A special thank you to:

30 Minute Hit
BRODO Kitchen
Carrie Few – Trauma informed Yoga
DJ Tenacious T
Fru Family
Innovative Career Wear
Iron Woman Golf Tournament
Mark's Workwear
Mary & the Knitting Ladies
Morgan Hughes
Pharma Save Okanagan Falls
Penticton Foundry
Penticton Soup Sisters
Rosanne – Tuesday Open Studio
Shopper's Drug Mart
Soda Creek Soap
SOWINS Volunteers & Board
The Bag Ladies
Trudy Hanratty
Vanilla Pod & Poplar Grove

All businesses, organizations & individuals who donated to Walk a Mile 2015 & Share the Spirit.

We apologize for any omissions. Please let us know if you would like to be added to the list.

Your support and contributions are highly appreciated.

Donations Received in Memory of :

Colleen Brennan

Sandy Forsythe

Suzanne (Sue) Logan

Laura Janice Robinson
Mother

Bequest Received from:

The Estate of Mariquita Christine Francisca Mills





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