

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023 - 2024**



## our vision

A community without violence and abuse.

## our mission

SOWINS provides safe, accessible, person-centred supports and preventative interventions to individuals who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence and abuse. SOWINS also provides community education to strengthen the safety net for our



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# A message from SOWINS Executive Director

In 2023-2024, SOWINS provided hope and empowerment to individuals and their children, who have experienced violence and abuse. During this year we faced some challenges as well as opportunities and continued our mission with energy and optimism. The demand for our programs and services continued to grow and this last year we were fortunate to receive a grant that allowed us to significantly reduce the wait-list for our Community-Based Counselling Program. The ability to respond to an individual's support needs, promptly, increases not only their safety, but the number of positive therapeutic outcomes.

As we approach the refresh of our strategic plan this Spring, it is important to reflect on the significant milestones and accomplishments that we have achieved over the past three years. These achievements have laid a strong foundation for our future endeavors and showcase our commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. Below are some of the key highlights:

- 1. Developed accountability measures for governance**-training provided to Directors, updated Terms of Reference, implemented the use of a competency matrix and successfully recruited several new Directors, and updated the Director nomination process.
- 2. Ensure effective supports are in place for all operations**- hired an additional Transition House Manager to increase support and supervision for front-line staff, and to address workload concerns. HR and Directors work out of the TH one day per week to promote a "we" culture and to provide additional support. We improved our IT system, and moved to a cloud-based system, allowing us to work more effectively and efficiently.
- 3. Ensure client safety in all our programs**- Added an additional night staff position at the TH, updated policies and procedures on harm-reduction, safe storage and substance abuse.
- 4. Develop a staff attraction and retention plan**- implemented an employee recognition program, and revised language in job postings, improved payroll software system.

The increased demand for services continued throughout all our programs and the increased inflation costs have affected us all. We are incredibly grateful for the ongoing generous support from government and community funders, foundations, service clubs, businesses, and individuals, who have helped us sustain our programs and services and help survivors of violence and abuse transform their lives and break the cycle of abuse. Your unwavering support is what allows us to innovate, to find creative solutions and pioneer new programs and services that get us closer to a vision of a community without violence and abuse.

And to the individuals we serve-we commend you for your courage and to come forward to find ways to live a life free from violence and abuse. Your trust and openness are inspiring, and it is a privilege to work with you.

**Liz Gomes - Executive Director**



# A message from SOWINS Acting Chair

It is an honor to present our 2023 report for the Annual General Meeting. This moment allows us to reflect on our achievements, express gratitude for the hard work and dedication that brought us here, and look to chart the path forward for the South Okanagan Women in Need Society. While many on this year's Board of Directors are new to SOWINS, they have all worked tirelessly to fulfill their roles as effectively as possible.

Throughout the past year, we have witnessed the remarkable compassion and generosity of our community. I extend my deepest appreciation to each of you – our dedicated donors, volunteers, staff, and partners – for your unwavering commitment to our cause, supporting individuals to live a life free of abuse and violence.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank Liz Gomes, our Executive Director, for her dedication and endless commitment to her work with SOWINS and as an advocate for the women we serve throughout our community. Your genuine care and compassion for the SOWINS mission and those we serve truly sets you apart. Your commitment to positive change and empowering women is a true testament to your leadership.

This year saw the stepping down of Liz Wilson as our Board Chair. On behalf of the board, we express our gratitude for her incredible efforts and leadership. Liz, your passion and tireless dedication have made a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve, and for that, we are grateful.

Liz has left big shoes to fill, but I am committed to upholding the values of transparency, integrity, and inclusivity that are at the heart of our organization. Together, we will navigate the challenges ahead with determination and optimism, continuing to make a meaningful impact and inspire positive change as we strive for a community free from violence and abuse.

## Sarah Wingfield - Acting Board Chair

### Board of Directors

Liz Wilson - Chair  
Sarah Wingfield - Vice Chair / Acting Chair  
Nancy Folkestad - Secretary / Treasurer  
Holly Wakeman - Director  
Tracy Van Raes - Director  
Brenda Baptiste - Director  
Cristina McEwen - Director  
Natalie Ferebee - Director  
Sydney Bell - Interim Director

### Leadership Team

Liz Gomes - Executive Director  
Sharon Morrow - Director of Strategy & Operations  
Erica Markus-Pawliuk - Director of Community Programs & Services  
Korina Hoogenraad - Director of Human Resources  
Rick Kreklewetz - Director of Finance  
Marni Adams - Fund Development

# Who we are

The South Okanagan Women in Need Society (SOWINS) has been serving women, youth, and children for more than 40 years. Our programs and services provide shelter, safety, and support by helping individuals recognize, understand, and overcome the impacts of abuse. Our services are provided to individuals who have experienced, or who are at risk of experiencing violence or abuse in the South Okanagan (from Summerland to Osoyoos and from Naramata to Keremeos and Princeton).

Our specialized programs include:

- Emergency Housing & 2nd-stage Housing
- Long-term Housing & Rental Supplements
- Youth Emergency Housing
- 24-hour Crisis Line
- Free Counselling Services
- Intake, Outreach, and Advocacy Program
- Outreach and Housing Outreach Program
- Life skills and Pre-employment Explore Program
- Community Based Victim Services Program
- Sexual Assault Services Program
- Mobile Outreach Program



# Why we exist



1 in 3 women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.



In Canada a woman is killed approximately every week by an intimate partner.



Approx. 70% of domestic abuse incidents are not reported to the police.



Approx. 300 women & children are turned away from shelters on any given night in Canada because they are full.



90% of children & youth are in the same or next room during an attack on their mothers.



Approx. 32,000 children are exposed to domestic abuse & violence every year.

# Our impact

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*We are here for clients 24 hours a day!*

*We have a 24-Hour Crisis & Emergency Shelter and a 24-Hour Sexual Assault Support Crisis line to ensure our clients receive the support they need, when they need it.*



2000

Answered more than 2000 crisis calls in 2023

1255

Counselling sessions for Women & Children in 2023

1638

Provided 1638 overnight stays for children and youth in 2023

20,000

Handed out over 20,000 life saving supplies throughout the South Okanagan in 2023

*“ My kids and I wouldn’t be where we are today without SOWINS ”*

# A safe place to rest

**For more than 40 years, SOWINS has provided safety, shelter, and support to individuals in the South Okanagan who have experienced domestic violence and abuse. As the world changes, so do the needs of survivors, who are often left with long-term and complex struggles resulting from trauma. With your help, we can give hope to these survivors as they carve new paths toward living a life free from violence and abuse.**

“Before I reached out to SOWINS, I was in a deep and dark place. My marriage of 15 years was destroyed, my now ex-husband was lost in drug use, and the home we shared was no longer ours. The worst part was that my two beautiful children had been traumatized. They were hurting deeply and suffering from witnessing violence. I was so broken that I could not see a way out. I had no hope. All I knew then, was that I needed to protect my children and find a safe place to rest.

I called a friend who told me that I should call SOWINS. She shared how they had helped her and that they would help us too. I felt ashamed and afraid to reach out but when I looked at my children’s faces that day, I found the courage to call them. After a brief phone call, I was directed to the Women’s Transition Home, so I packed a few bags and I took my children, not knowing what would happen next. We were scared, but with all of the strength I had left in me, I told my kids that it would be okay, not knowing at the time if that was true.

When we arrived, one of the staff members took us to the family room and welcomed us without judgment, without asking about all the awful details. She just looked at us and spoke softly with the compassion we all needed so badly in that moment. She helped us feel at ease and immediately safe. Within a short amount of time, my kids was laughing and playing again, a stark difference from the tears when we walked in, and later that evening my son said to me

***“Mom it feels like I can breathe again.”***

Those words that told me I had done the right thing and that it really was going to be OK.

All of the staff there were incredibly supportive, and they gave us so much more than a safe place to stay. They gave us hope when we needed it most, they shared kindness and encouraged us, and they helped me find the resources we needed.

With the help of the fantastic team at SOWINS and their resources, we were able to find a home and begin our healing journey. SOWINS provided new house supplies like towels and dishes, while we started out on our own. They continued to provide support through their rental program, check-ins, and offered programs for children who have witnessed violence, and personal counseling for me too.

The programs and services through SOWINS were a blessing. Without them, I know I wouldn’t have been able to find myself again and I wouldn’t have been able to help my children move forward either. I am incredibly grateful to SOWINS and their team today and always.”



# Your impact!

SOWINS continues to receive an incredible amount of support from the community through annual campaigns and fundraisers along with general donations and Foundation gifts. These funds go directly into the programs and services that support women, children, and youth in our community.

A few highlights included:

## Annual Walk to End Abuse 2023

Last year, the SOWINS Annual Walk to End Abuse, proudly presented by the Penticton Foundry, took place at Rotary Park. Thanks to the support from our community, we saw an impressive turnout and SOWINS successfully raised \$50,000! We are immensely grateful to all our sponsors, vendors, generous supporters, and community members for their contributions and unwavering support.



## Share the Spirit of Giving 2023

SOWINS largest giving campaign runs from October to December each year. Giving comes in many forms including donations, sponsoring a family, or sponsoring a backpack. Our 2023 campaign saw more than \$250,000 in donations, 109 families received sponsorship and 40 backpacks were provided. We also received media sponsorship with a value of \$37,000.

## Have a Heart Radiothon 2024

On March 8th, 2024, Together with Penticton's Bounce Radio, SOWINS raised more than \$55,000 for local women, youth, and children that are experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence and abuse in our community.

We are so grateful for the support of our community, Penticton Move 97.1, Bounce Radio, and all the local businesses who donated to our fundraiser and raffle.



# SOWINS Spotlight

We would like to highlight and thank some of our generous supporters in the community! These passionate supporters are individuals, companies and family foundations that have made significant contributions to SOWINS towards our mission and program work!

Christopher Grauer - In loving memory  
 Irene Gateson  
 Diane Northcote  
 Felix Schellenberg  
 George Greenwood  
 The Pettigrew/Brouwer Foundation  
 Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth De Beudrap Foundation  
 Canadian Women's Foundation  
 Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health  
 Royal LePage Shelter Foundation  
 Orofino Winery

Poplar Grove Winery  
 Highstreet Skaha Shores  
 The Penticton Foundry  
 Cendek Railings Ltd.  
 Rotary Club of Penticton  
 RPR Plumbing and Air Conditioning  
 Cantex Okanagan Construction  
 Central Interior Traffic Control  
 Fraternal Order of Eagles 4281  
 McElhanney Penticton  
 Sunrise Rotary Club

*There are many more to add to this list that wish to remain anonymous, we thank you for your generous support.*

# Funder Spotlight



Health Canada    Santé Canada



Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General



Public Safety Canada    Sécurité publique Canada



Ministry of Children and Family Development



# Community Champion Spotlight

## CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

*"It was our third annual breakfast and we we're able to raise \$3,000 for SOWINS this year! Plus with the Federated matching grant that will be brought to \$4,500 this fall.*

*- Sarah Taylor, Executive Officer for CHBA SO*



## JCI - COMMUNITY SPOONS

*"JCI is a group of young professionals aged 18-40 committed to improving ourselves and our community. We believe everyone deserves a warm meal and a safe place to live. Recognizing the impact of SOWINS in our area, and JCI already having the Community Spoons Movement, we found a shared vision with SOWINS.*

*Backed by a dedicated committee and caring volunteers, we dedicate an evening to making delicious soup, sharing information about JCI and SOWINS, and writing caring messages on each container. By doing so, we show women and children that people care about them. This support reassures them that, despite their current struggles, others are rooting for them and willing to help"*

*- Danny Reigh | JCI Penticton - Community Spoons*



# Financial Overview

## SOUTH OKANAGAN WOMEN IN NEED SOCIETY

Statement of Financial Position


March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
<b>Assets</b>		
Current		
Cash (Note 3)	\$ 246,442	\$ 355,388
Term deposits (Note 4)	466,076	300,851
Marketable securities, at market value	-	420,548
Accounts receivable (Note 5)	116,698	13,083
Prepaid expenses	46,526	39,356
	875,742	1,129,226
Tangible capital assets (Note 6)	3,088,529	3,187,947
	\$ 3,964,271	\$ 4,317,173
<b>Liabilities and Net assets</b>		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 7)	\$ 351,913	\$ 336,413
Deposits received	28,635	27,554
Current portion of long term debt (Note 8)	5,992	8,686
Deferred contributions (Note 9)	70,308	169,664
	456,848	542,317
Long term debt (Note 8)	-	5,999
Deferred capital contributions (Note 10)	2,305,848	2,407,864
	2,305,848	2,413,863
	2,762,696	2,956,180
Net assets		
Unrestricted	228,531	427,989
Internally restricted	56,041	43,723
Externally restricted	140,314	123,882
Invested in tangible capital assets (Note 11)	776,689	765,399
	1,201,575	1,360,993
	\$ 3,964,271	\$ 4,317,173

Commitments (Note 12)

Approved by the Directors

 Director

 Director

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

# Financial Overview

## SOUTH OKANAGAN WOMEN IN NEED SOCIETY

Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
<b>Revenues</b>		
Contract revenues	\$ 2,790,717	\$ 2,232,336
Donations (Note 13)	485,609	461,168
Grants	213,714	488,644
Rental revenues	114,849	109,452
Investment income	15,950	15,956
Miscellaneous	6,914	6,275
Reimbursements	1,709	1,226
	<b>3,629,462</b>	<b>3,315,057</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Advertising and promotion	5,129	5,000
Amortization	118,739	127,389
Automotive	18,585	18,599
Bad debts (recovery)	(407)	646
Board expenses	11,601	88
Client supplies and food	191,542	203,161
Client travel	3,591	4,210
Donated goods and services	11,955	21,444
Equipment rentals	37,332	52,962
Fundraising expenses	14,157	12,510
Information technology	50,904	30,095
Insurance	27,916	25,580
Interest and bank charges	9,815	5,159
Interest on long term debt	-	189
Meals and entertainment	635	496
Memberships and dues	4,871	4,651
Office	22,566	24,655
Printing, photocopying and postage	11,433	13,503
Professional fees	45,793	65,049
Property taxes	328	305
Rental	38,234	34,003
Repairs and maintenance	100,226	101,214
Salaries and related benefits	2,874,594	2,517,237
Sub-contracts	38,090	60,354
Supplies	7,103	3,266
Telephone	21,334	20,832
Training	56,034	49,045
Travel	9,792	14,975
Utilities	37,068	39,464
Volunteer program expenses	124	692
	<b>3,769,084</b>	<b>3,456,773</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenues over expenses from operations</b>	<b>(139,622)</b>	<b>(141,716)</b>
<b>Other expenses</b>		
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	10,945	6,225
Loss on sale of marketable securities	8,851	-
Unrealized loss on marketable securities	-	1,556
	<b>19,796</b>	<b>7,781</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>\$ (159,418)</b>	<b>\$ (149,497)</b>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.