



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2024 - 2025

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 community.



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A Message from SOWINS Executive Director

This past year at SOWINS has been one of incredible growth, meaningful impact, and community strength.

A major highlight was our inaugural Inspiring Hope Gala – a beautiful evening that brought our community together in celebration and support. The overwhelming success of the event reflected not only our team’s passion and dedication but also the deep commitment of our supporters, sponsors, and volunteers. Together, we raised essential funds to continue providing life-changing services for women, children, and families in our region.

We also marked the conclusion of our Health Canada grant – a transformative source of support that enabled us to provide enhanced wraparound services for residents in our Transition House and Second Stage Housing Programs. This funding made a meaningful difference, offering stability, mental health support, and healing resources to over 330 women during some of their most vulnerable moments. With the grant now ended, we are actively seeking new funding opportunities to continue this essential work and address the critical gap left behind.

As global and local economic uncertainty continues to grow, we are especially mindful of how this will impact the women we serve – women already navigating trauma, housing instability, and poverty. These pressures do not exist in isolation; when the broader world is in crisis, those on the margins feel the effects first and most intensely. Based on our deep understanding of these realities, we anticipate increased demand for essential services such as safe shelter, food, counseling, outreach, and safety planning.

At the same time, we remain concerned about the stability of government funding, which has not kept pace with inflation or the rising cost of delivering these critical supports. This financial gap adds urgency to our efforts to find sustainable, community-driven solutions.

In response to these growing pressures, we have taken proactive steps toward long-term sustainability. This year, we began exploring the feasibility of launching a social enterprise thrift store – a new revenue stream that would help fund our programs while providing free essential items to the women and children we support. Additionally, it would offer meaningful volunteer opportunities and increase community engagement.

To our community, our donors, and our funders – thank you. And to our incredible staff and Board of Directors – your unwavering dedication, compassion, and belief in this mission are what carry us forward every single day. Together, we are building something powerful: a community where safety, healing, and hope are possible for everyone.

Liz Gomes - Executive Director

A Message from SOWINS Board Chair

This past year has brought another round of firsts for SOWINS. In November, we hosted our very first gala, and it was an outstanding success. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our staff, board members, and volunteers, the event exceeded all expectations.

We also embarked on a feasibility review to explore the potential return of the SOWINS Thrift Store. As part of that process, we hosted a pop-up thrift shop in April to gauge community interest. To say the response was overwhelming would be an understatement. Donations poured in so quickly we had to stop accepting them a full week early. The turnout and support were so strong, we could have extended the pop-up over multiple days and still had both items and eager shoppers!

I am very proud of the organization we represent and of the unwavering dedication our staff brings to their work every single day. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you. And to my fellow board members, thank you for your continued partnership, collaboration, and commitment to the mission of SOWINS. I'm confident that, together, we're heading into another successful year.

Sarah Wingfield - Board Chair

SOWINS Leadership

Board of Directors

Sarah Wingfield - Chair

Cristina McEwen - Vice Chair

Natalie Ferebee - Secretary / Treasurer

Holly Wakeman - Director

Tracy Van Raes - Director

Brenda Baptiste - Director

Betti White - Director

Melissa Letender - Director

Marvin Mizinski - Director

Leadership Team

Liz Gomes - Executive Director

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
- 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

We are here for clients 24 hours a day!

We have a 24-Hour Crisis & Emergency Shelter to ensure our clients receive the support they need, when they need it.

2000

Answered more than 2000 crisis calls in 2024

1552

Counselling sessions for Women & Children in 2024

3418

Provided 3418 overnight stays at our Transition House for women, youth and children in 2024

112

Supported 112 women and families through our Share the Spirit of Giving Campaign in 2024

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

Listening, Understanding & Supporting

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.

“I am a mother of three boys and when I found myself in an extremely scary and desperate situation I had to reach out to SOWINS for help. I had no idea what I was about to enter into when arriving at the transition house with my children and I was absolutely terrified.

The experience ultimately was the best thing that could have happened to me and my children. I can honestly compare the staff as like a family, a network of women that did an amazing job of listening, understanding and supporting.

When you're in need of SOWINS thier experience and support is unlike anything you can receive from any other organization. When I was at my weakest they were right there to point to and bring out my strengths.

One counsellor in particular, did an outstanding job at patiently and sincerely listening to me through my tears while I processed the hardships I faced which led me to SOWINS. Even when I felt I was at my weakest, she reminded me that I was still strong and it's ok to feel what I felt. She knew which organizations I needed to reach out to to receive income, supports, and to obtain housing and financial stability for me and my children. I would have been lost navigating the systems on my own. When some serious roadblocks came up, she guided me to overcome them myself but was there if I needed the extra support.

When my family and loved ones either turned their backs to me or didn't have the means to help, SOWINS was there. They became my family and continue to be in touch. Believe me, these words do not express the entirety of what they did for my children and I.

I am truly forever grateful.”



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:

Inspiring Hope Gala

Our inaugural Inspiring Hope fundraising event, presented by Penticton Foundry, was a powerful celebration of community, compassion, and change. Through heartfelt stories, exciting auctions, and shared purpose, over \$155,000 was raised to support SOWINS programs for women, youth, and children in the South Okanagan. This remarkable achievement reflects a collective commitment to building a future free from violence and filled with hope.



Tim Horton's Smile Cookie Week

The second annual Tim Horton's Smile Cookie Week in support of SOWINS was an outstanding success. Thanks to generous community support, over \$21,000 was raised for SOWINS' programs and services. This incredible achievement would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, including the Penticton Vees and enthusiastic students from Princess Margaret Secondary School.

Share the Spirit of Giving

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 2024 campaign helped more than 110 local families and women in need and provided 50 backpacks to unhomed individuals.



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!

Betts Electric Security Ltd.
BMO Bank of Montreal
Cantex Okanagan Construction Ltd.
Cendek Railings Ltd.
Central Interior Traffic Control Ltd.
Community Foundation Of The South Okanagan CFSO
Department of Justice Canada
The Great Big Red Barn Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth De Beaudrap Foundation
Penticton Foundry Ltd.
The Pettigrew/Brouwer Foundation
Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health
Timmins Street Holdings Ltd.
Tim Hortons Advertising and Promotion Fund (Canada) Inc.

April Martin
Clifford Bonnett
Diane Northcote
Holly Wakeman
John Kot
Keith Kostek
Kimberly Grassick
Michelle Gans
Natalie Ferebee
Pamela Hakanson
Peerless Ltd
Ruth Liechti
Sharon Romank
V. Neal Davies

Funder Spotlight



Public Safety Canada Sécurité publique Canada



Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General



Health Canada Santé Canada



Ministry of Children and Family Development



COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA



Community Champion Spotlight

TIM HORTONS SOUTH OKANAGAN

"We chose to support SOWINS because we believe in building a community where every woman and child feels safe, supported, and empowered. SOWINS offers critical resources, compassion, and hope to those who need it most. It's a privilege to stand alongside them in supporting their programs and working toward ending violence and abuse in the South Okanagan."

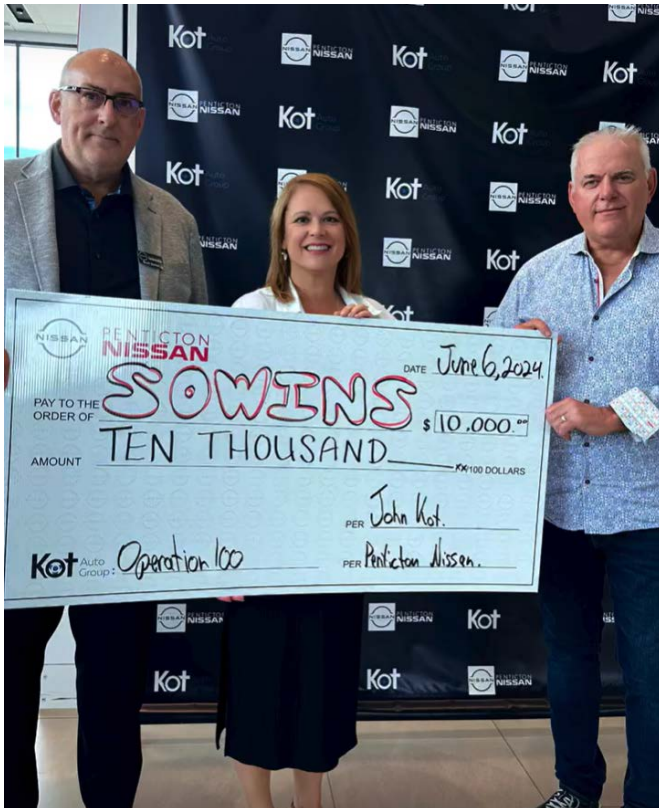
- Nicole MacMillan | Owner & Operator



PENTICTON NISSAN

"Penticton Nissan & The KOT Auto Group choose to support SOWINS because everyone deserves safety, dignity, and a chance to rebuild. Their work changes lives and strengthens our entire community—it's an impact I'm proud to stand behind."

- Scott Barber | General Manager



Financial Overview

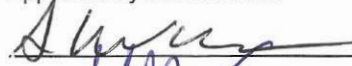
SOUTH OKANAGAN WOMEN IN NEED SOCIETY

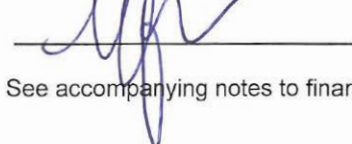
Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2025

	2025	2024
Assets		
Current		
Cash (Note 4)	\$ 395,097	\$ 246,442
Term deposits (Note 5)	342,966	466,076
Accounts receivable (Note 6)	118,730	116,698
Prepaid expenses	45,180	46,526
	901,973	875,742
Tangible capital assets (Note 7)	3,040,261	3,088,529
	\$ 3,942,234	\$ 3,964,271
Liabilities and Net assets		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 8)	\$ 350,777	\$ 351,913
Deposits received	24,377	28,635
Current portion of long term debt	-	5,992
Deferred contributions (Note 9)	188,865	70,308
	564,019	456,848
Deferred capital contributions (Note 10)	2,266,687	2,305,848
	2,830,706	2,762,696
Net assets		
Unrestricted	125,781	228,531
Internally restricted	45,985	56,041
Externally restricted	166,188	140,314
Invested in tangible capital assets (Note 11)	773,574	776,689
	1,111,528	1,201,575
	\$ 3,942,234	\$ 3,964,271

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, 2025

	2025	2024
Revenues		
Contract revenues	\$ 3,021,126	\$ 2,790,717
Donations (Note 12)	683,625	485,609
Rental revenues	129,973	114,849
Grants	77,080	213,714
Investment income	16,232	15,950
Miscellaneous	6,991	6,914
Reimbursements	6,406	1,709
	3,941,433	3,629,462
Expenses		
Advertising and promotion	11,061	5,129
Amortization	111,561	118,739
Automotive	16,480	18,585
Bad debt recovery	-	(407)
Board expenses	4,208	11,601
Client supplies and food	240,151	191,542
Client travel	1,157	3,591
Donated goods and services	42,406	11,955
Equipment rentals	27,419	37,332
Fundraising expenses	59,801	14,157
Information technology	44,352	50,904
Insurance	28,958	27,916
Interest and bank charges	13,220	9,815
Meals and entertainment	2,305	635
Memberships and dues	4,385	4,871
Office	9,434	22,566
Printing, photocopying and postage	12,071	11,433
Professional fees	29,731	45,793
Property taxes	378	328
Rental	23,381	38,234
Repairs and maintenance	88,510	100,226
Salaries and related benefits	3,129,434	2,874,594
Sub-contracts	21,712	38,090
Supplies	7,691	7,103
Telephone	20,782	21,334
Training	35,026	56,034
Travel	4,954	9,792
Utilities	40,912	37,068
Volunteer program expenses	-	124
	4,031,480	3,769,084
Deficiency of revenues over expenses from operations	(90,047)	(139,622)
Other expenses		
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	10,945
Loss on sale of marketable securities	-	8,851
	-	19,796
Deficiency of revenues over expenses	\$ (90,047)	\$ (159,418)

See accompanying notes to financial statements.