



DR. MARGARET SAVAGE
Crisis Centre

Annual Report

2020-2021



2020-2021

Our Vision

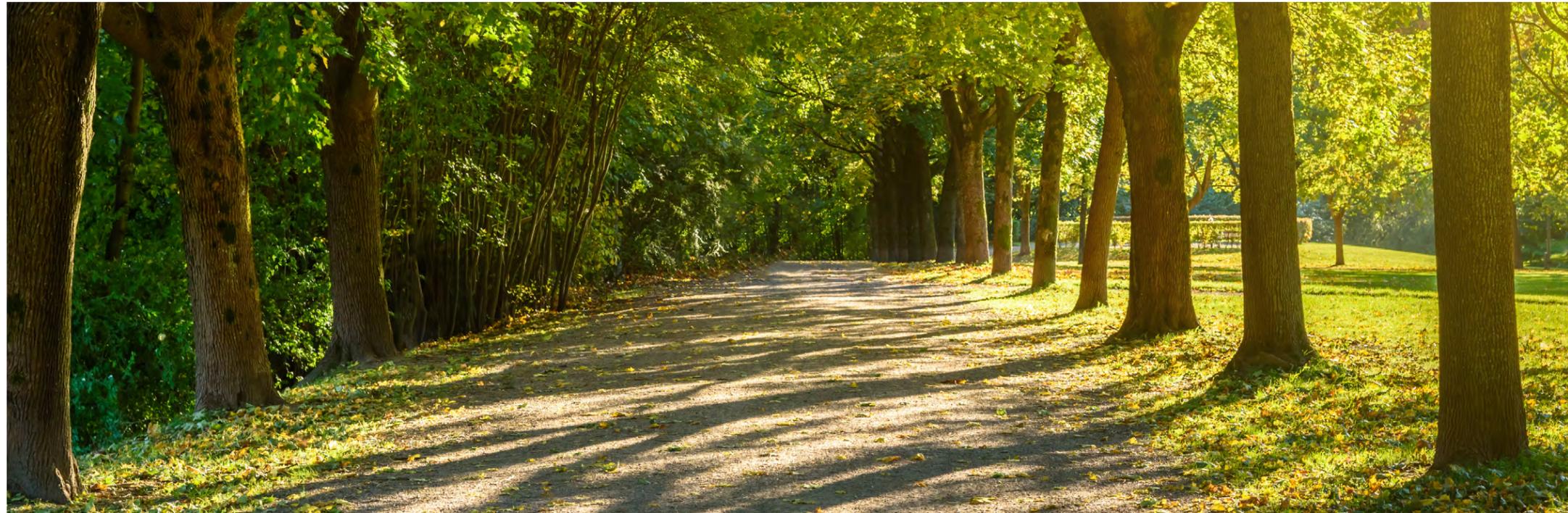
Prevention of family violence through public awareness, outreach and supports.



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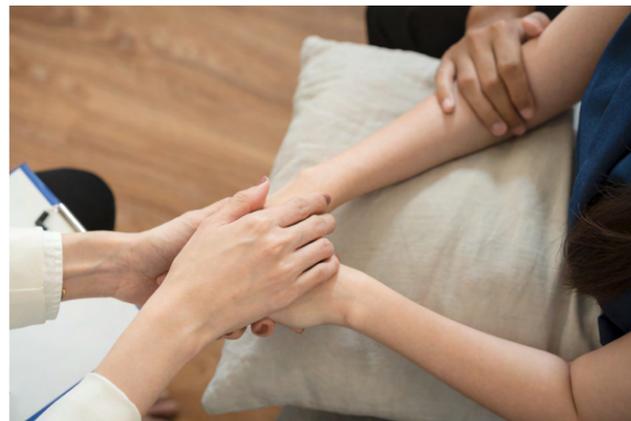




Message from the Executive Director

Susan White

Despite an unprecedented year full of closures, restrictions, limitations, and endless changes, we are proud that we have remained open to serve our clients and community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



Our management team has dedicated the past year to leading our greater staff team through the pandemic while working tirelessly behind the scenes to develop a Pandemic Plan, make adjustments as necessary, ensure our programs are fully staffed and as operational as possible, and promote the overall safety and wellbeing of all staff and individuals seeking our services.

Our management team took the opportunity to evaluate our programs and make adjustments to better meet the needs of those seeking our services.

Our entire staff team has demonstrated remarkable resiliency, understanding, and perseverance as they have handled the pandemic and the ongoing challenges with flexibility and compassion.

We simply could not have continued the amazing work that this organization does without the dedication of the entire staff team.

This last year has been difficult, but the strength of our team leaves us hopeful. We know that we can persevere and continue to support, advocate for, refer, and provide resources and information to those who need it most.

I am honoured to be a part of such an outstanding organization!



Julia's Story

Years after Julia stayed at the DMSCC, she sent us a letter.

**Names and details changed.*

My name is Julia*. I was a frequent visitor of your shelter, staying whenever I truly believed I was strong enough to leave the abusive relationship I was in.

Unfortunately, leaving proved to be one of the hardest decisions of my life. It took a lot of strength.

The workers were so kind and never made me feel judged for going back and forth, and although I felt embarrassed and weak, the shelter still was my home away from home.

I was 19 years old when I met M*. He swept me off my feet and I quickly got lost in him, overlooking many red flags and making excuses for his possessive behaviour and eventual physical abuse.

I quickly became pregnant in our relationship. He was abusive and controlled every part of my life and banned me from leaving the house while he was at work.

My pregnancy became difficult due to all the stress. M liked to drink a lot, which is when I would have to find a place to stay and you were always there for me.

My second to last visit to the shelter was the night I went into labour. The worker was



amazing and calm, and an ambulance was promptly called. I gave birth to a beautiful, healthy daughter whom I named Jane*. This was the moment where motherhood began for me.

When Jane was 6 weeks old, I finally left M for good. I came and stayed at the shelter and eventually was referred to a second-stage housing program, which was a stepping stone for me.

I was able to live comfortably in second-stage housing and was there for a few months with Jane. In all honesty, I have never had any addictions and have always led a healthy lifestyle, but M was an addiction in the most horrific way possible. I moved away from Alberta when Jane was 8 months old and secured an apartment close to my parents.

When Jane was 2, I started my first year of full-time college. My hard work paid off, and I graduated from college in 2010.

I became employed immediately in the social services field. I made a career move when my hours were reduced, and was soon hired and work full-time about 15 minutes from home and Jane's school.

I couldn't be happier. I have been able to provide Jane with a very comfortable life without the help of her father.

I received full custody and guardianship of Jane, and after many attempts at allowing M to have contact with her, I realized we were much happier without him in our lives.

It is so easy to sometimes forget just how much strength and pain it took to leave such an abusive relationship.

I cannot tell you how many years it took me to accept that I had at one time been a victim of abuse.

All this to say, thank you so much for believing in me. Thank you for your strength when I had none, for your kind words when all I was hearing was hate, for never judging me, for encouraging me to follow my dreams, for not seeing me as just a number. Thank you for showing me love, for listening, for caring.

You are one of the reasons that Jane and I lead such a good life now. I have never forgotten all that you have done, and I never will.

You were truly amazing in a time of darkness and showed me the light at the end of the tunnel where I could not see it. You will forever have a special place in my heart.

Thank you.

About the DMSCC

Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre

The DMSCC is a non-profit organization who offers:

- A 27 bed emergency shelter dedicated to assisting women and their children in need of short-term emergency accommodations.
- Joie's Phoenix House, a Second Stage Women's Shelter Program, offering safe, affordable housing and programming to families choosing to leave an abusive relationship.
- A community support program in both Cold Lake and Bonnyville that offers 1:1 supports to all women who are struggling with an unhealthy or abusive relationship or have left one.
- Public Education, bringing community awareness and education to the Lakeland area.
- A 24-hour helpline offering support and referrals to anyone who calls.



Our Vision

Prevention of family violence through public awareness, outreach and supports.



Over 110,000 safe bednights provided.

Core Values

Integrity

- + Offer support without judgment.

Respect

- + Being respectful in everything we do and showing respect to all.

Knowledgeable

- + Our staff supportively imparting information and resources to best assist our clients.

Cultural Diversity

- + Respecting a variety of cultures, lifestyles and beliefs.

Change

- + Encourage growth and awareness to create change.

Our Mission

- Provide safe and secure shelter and support to women and children in crisis.
- Assist individuals and families by providing resources and advocacy.
- Educate the public and create partnerships to prevent family violence and build stronger communities.



“You provided me with a home that has done more than you could ever imagine for my self-confidence and worth.”

- Former DMSCC Client

24 Hour Helpline: 1-780-594-3353

More about us...

Founded

1982

Employees

45

Hours of Operation

24 / 7 / 365

Main Office

Cold Lake, AB

Executive Director

Susan White

Outreach Offices

Bonnyville, AB
Cold Lake, AB

Highlights

Pet Housing

The importance of having pet housing first crossed our mind in 2019 when we learned the statistic that 56% of women delayed their decision to leave an abusive relationship due to fear of a pet's safety, and 89% of abused women reported that their partner also abused a pet.

To that end, we were able to fund-raise and break ground on a pet housing facility on site of our shelter with the help and support of wonderful organizations and businesses in our community and province.

COVID-19 affected our original vision in sharing the launch of the program with our community members, but we are happy to share the pet housing facility was able to safely accommodate family pets during COVID-19, while their human family members were guests at our shelter! While we could not host a "grand-opening" as originally envisioned with our community supporters, we appreciate all their support bringing this program to fruition.



Spiritual Room

Our spiritual room is a new project which provides a quiet, soothing space to evoke feelings of peace and tranquility as well as allows women to practice their faith and spirituality privately.

The addition of a calming, spiritual space was to reflect the diverse spiritual traditions of our community members, and become a space to allow for smudging, reflection, healing, and faith-based practices to help ensure our community members are connected to their culture, identity, faith, and especially spirituality through their healing process.

The space is non-denominational in nature, but will be equipped with faith-based and cultural/spiritual items to allow for each person's practice in healing.



In-House Clinician

We are so thrilled to have added a Child and Family Counsellor to the team in the last year to support the women and children living in Joie's Phoenix House, our second-stage housing program.

Our clinician practices using models of therapy that are heavily supported by current research to work with families who have experienced domestic violence in the past.

Before coming to Joie's Phoenix House, families have often done a lot of work to manage crises in their life. Once in the program, our clinician collaborates with the JPH team to support clients that are ready to begin thinking about living independently with their children in the community but have also identified that they would benefit from some extra support getting there.

Our clinician provides individual and family sessions to help clients identify their family's unique needs, explore how they have been impacted by trauma, develop long-term living skills, get relief from mental health symptoms, and to develop confidence in their ability to maintain a safe life for themselves and their children.



Our Child and Family Trauma Counsellor, Heather Hughson.

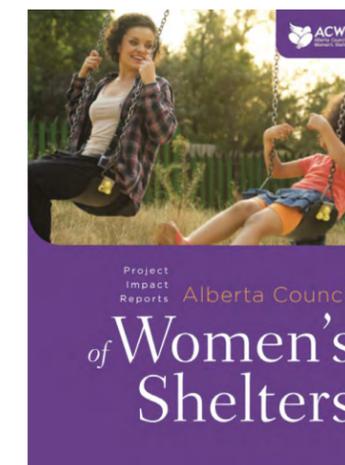
Project Impact

Project Impact allowed us to evaluate and communicate the impacts that our Emergency Residential Shelter has on our clients in a meaningful way.

The aim of our evaluation project was to identify the ways that our Emergency Residential Shelter is impacting the individuals fleeing intimate partner violence and are accessing our services. Based on the findings of our evaluation, we were able to conclude that we are meeting our intended impacts and reaffirmed what we already know:

Healing is a journey and there is not a one-size-fits-all model that can be applied to healing. Instead, healing must be individualized and involves education, support, self-love, confidence building, trust, time, and connection. It also involves meeting the individual where they are at, restoring the power that was once lost, and exploring the needs, wants, and goals of the individual as it is their life and their choice. It was because of this evaluation that we realized the importance of a quiet, or spiritual space, leading to the construction of our new Spiritual Room.

Our role is simply to guide, advocate, support, and provide information, resources, and referrals to assist the individuals in reaching goals as defined by that individual.



Available at Amazon.ca

Board of Directors



Emily Allsop
President



Cathy Orr
Vice President



Jeannette Lange
Secretary



Audrey Cochrane
Director



Megan Jones
Director



Amber Martin
Director



Rhonda Squire
Director

Management Team



Susan White
Executive Director



Della Nash
Executive Assistant



Stephanie Nieman
Assistant Director



Shelby Secord
Program Coordinator



Dawn Weber
Social Enterprise
Coordinator



Cindy Yang
Resource Development
& Public Education
Coordinator



Heather Hughson
Child and Family
Counsellor

Our Programs

Helpline

Our 24/7 Helpline is an integral resource in our community and offers crisis intervention, safety planning, referrals, advocacy, shelter services, and general information.

This year our callers have expressed that our helpline has been critically important in supporting them as they deal with feeling the isolation and affects of COVID-19.

Realizing that stay-at-home orders and major stressors cause spikes in cases of domestic violence, our crisis intervention workers who support callers on our Helpline have been working tirelessly to provide support to our community.

24 Hour Helpline: 780-594-3353

Toll Free: 1-866-594-0533



Emergency Shelter

Our Emergency Shelter has continued to remain open and operational, 24/7. As our core program, we continue our support for women and their children by providing safe shelter not only for themselves, but also for their four-legged family members in our on-site pet housing facility!

Upon arrival, our community members are provided with some basic necessities to make their temporary stay with us as comfortable as possible.

Our crisis intervention workers work with the women to connect them with supports and services to meet their needs.

With the help of our child support team, and our in-house school, children are also well-supported during their stay with us.

To learn more about our Emergency Shelter program, please contact our 24 hour Helpline at 780-594-3353.



JPH

Joie's Phoenix House, our second-stage housing program, has 6 fully-furnished, self-contained apartment units designed specifically for women with their children fleeing domestic violence.

With their commitment to self-empowerment, our families work closely with our Family Support Workers and Child and Family Trauma Counsellor to learn life skills and navigate resources with the goal to transition into successful, independent community living after they complete our program.

For more information on Joie's Phoenix House, please contact our Helpline at 780-594-3353.



Community Outreach

Our Outreach teams in Cold Lake and Bonnyville offer one-on-one support, with newly added meeting formats last year to include virtual meeting opportunities.

Our Outreach team provides free, confidential support with a trauma-informed lens to both men and women in our community.

Our team also provides public education which is offered to the community, to other agencies, and to schools, each with the theme of empowering individuals through information, connection, and life-skill building.

Some of our programs include:

- Healthy Youth Relationships
- Community Kitchens
- A Better Way for Men
- A Better Way for Women
- Empowering Women
- Healthy Babies
- and more!

We also offer general presentations on domestic violence, and DMSCC supports and services.

To book a free, public education session, or for more information on our services, please contact Cindy Yang at resourcedevelop@dmscc.ca.

Community Kitchens

Community Kitchens was piloted in February 2019 and has exceeded our expectations in demand. The program is taught by a red seal chef.

We started this program to support women in our second-stage housing program develop important kitchen skills to support them in creating and providing healthy, nutritious, and budget-friendly meals for themselves and their children.

We quickly expanded the program and had participants from multiple agencies, and from Bonnyville. Through grant funding, we were able to expand our space and create a small teaching kitchen on-site.

Due to COVID-19, we've shifted our program delivery and have re-imagined our program in two new ways which launched in 2021!

Part 1: Second Helping offers free, nutritious meals to community members experiencing food insecurity.

Part 2: Pantry to Plate will feature more opportunity for the participants to create the recipes from home, through the help of a guided video from our Food Services Coordinator!



Social Enterprise

Social Enterprise fundraising is important.

All proceeds of sales from Orbiting Trends support our Shelter and programming, while Ella's Closet proceeds support both the DMSCC and other community agencies and teams as designated by the consignor.



We created Orbiting Trends (OT) A Thrift Store For A Cause to generate funds for and promote the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre programs. The 3000 square foot retail location in Cold Lake, Alberta is generously stocked daily with gently used clothing and household goods donated by our community.

Orbiting Trends provides the Dr Margaret Savage Crisis Centre access for clients in emergency situations that need clothing and supplies.

To become a donor at Orbiting Trends, visit our Facebook @orbitingtrends, find us on Instagram @orbitingtrendz or call 780-594-5777 ext. 1.

Items that are sold at affordable prices are part of our strong fundraising campaign to support the DMSCC with 100% of the proceeds. Orbiting Trends is proud to offer free clothing to our vulnerable population as well as providing free winter coats and gear to children in need every winter as part of our Annual Kozy Kids Campaign.

Orbiting Trends celebrated 30 years in business in 2020. This milestone was bittersweet for our thrift store, as we could not host any celebration events because of Covid-19. Despite the challenges, the OT Team carried on with changes to safety protocols to meet the needs of keeping the team and the community safe. We introduced a sanitizing station for customers, mask wearing for both staff and customers, as well as new quarantine procedures for donations.

Hours of operation:
Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm
Open until 6pm on Thursday.
Closed Sundays and Stat Holidays.



Ella's Closet - Consignment for Your Community is the second retail venture owned and operated by the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre in Cold Lake.

This store is an outlet for raising money for all registered charities, non-profit organizations and schools in Cold Lake!

We sell gently used ladies' clothing and accessories so donors can turn their closet into a direct cash donation.

Ella's Closet is already becoming known for carrying more upscale second hand brand names, but the focus is quality.

The Lakeland knows the historical impact Dr. Margaret Savage had on our community which led to her name being honoured within the DMSCC organization. A lesser known fact is that Dr. Savage's first given name was actually Ella.

To become a community donor at Ella's Closet, visit our Facebook @ellascolake or Instagram @ellascolake or call 780-594-5777 ext. 2.

As an additional tribute to her legacy, Ella's Closet continues to honour the namesake.

We faced economic challenges in relation to Covid-19 during our 2020/21 fiscal year, but we were able to continue strong in our fundraising efforts.

Through the incredible support that our community has shown, the DMSCC was able to serve Downtown Cold Lake in a creative way that gives back, supporting 14 various local charities and schools.



Hours of operation:
Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm
Open until 6pm on Thursday.
Closed Sundays and Stat Holidays.



Stats This year our numbers are considerably lower than usual, because COVID protocols and mandatory isolation and quarantine orders reduced the capacity of our shelter.

Event Photos

137 Women and 90 Children Stayed in our emergency shelter. The average stay was **7 days**.

1,556 calls came in to our helpline.

130 individuals were supported by Outreach Team.

Joie's Phoenix House, our second stage program, housed and supported **8 women and 21 children**.

Our in-house school had **45 student days**.

Our Child and Family Trauma Counsellor provided **144 sessions**.



Fund Development

Have you felt the isolating affects of the global COVID-19 pandemic? So has Olivia. This year has been especially difficult for her.

Olivia lives with her abusive partner, and because of the public safety orders in place, she has been isolated with her abuser more than ever before. Her home has become a prison, and she fears for her safety. She wants to get away from her abuser and reclaim her life, but it's not so simple. She can't just sneak out the door and never come back, she and her partner have children together. Her son is eight, and her daughter is three. There's no simple solution to Olivia's problem.

Even if she escapes to safety with her children, the change will disrupt her family. Where would they stay? What about the dog? The kids will be heartbroken if they have to leave behind the family pet. Olivia's partner has also pressured her into financial dependence, so she cannot afford to pay for a place for her family to live until after she has some time to heal and start a new life.

Olivia could be your friend, your sister, or your daughter. Has anyone you know become more isolated? Do you know what signs to watch for to spot domestic abuse?

Olivia could even be you. Most abuse survivors do not realize that they are in an abusive relationship until after the fact, if they are fortunate enough to exit the situation and gain some distance.

The Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre is here to help Olivia, her children, and even the family pet. Our Helpline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. You are never alone.

Our shelter provides a safe place for Olivia and her family to stay while they regroup and seek long-term living arrangements.

Abuse leaves a lasting impact on the lives of everyone it affects. The healing process for survivors takes time. Joie's Phoenix House, our second stage independent living program for women recovering from domestic abuse situations, is here to support abuse survivors in rebuilding their lives and confidence. Survivors can will work with support staff, including our in house Child and Family Trauma Counsellor, who will support them in the healing process, and in facing the new challenges that life may bring.

Our world has just faced a year of unprecedented levels of human isolation, and our community around Cold Lake, Alberta continues to face an ongoing struggle with domestic violence. We are actively educating the public on the what abuse is, and the resources available for those who are experiencing abuse.

We've made great strides, and we're proud of everything we have accomplished. Together with our supporters we have continued to honour the legacy of Dr. Margaret Savage, providing safety and healing for those affected by domestic violence, and other forms of abuse.

But of course, there is still so much work to be done. We do not have the capacity at our locations to help everyone who needs it. There is a larger need for our services than we can meet without additional funding.

Your support is absolutely critical to our efforts in helping women affected by domestic abuse. When you donate, you ensure that someone is always there to answer our Helpline for those in need. With your donation, we can grow our facilities and expand the services we can provide for clients and their children.

You really will be making a tremendous difference. As sobering as the fact may be, there are times when **your donation will be the difference** between a woman and her children being offered full or partial support.

With your help we can also expand our public education initiative, and continue to offer other useful programs like our Community Kitchens initiative.

If you are able, we'd love it if you could sign up for a monthly donation of \$50 to help us achieve our vision: The prevention of family violence through public awareness, outreach and supports.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Susan White
Executive Director

Your donation will go toward supporting:

- 24 Hour Helpline
- Emergency Shelter
- Joie's Phoenix House second stage housing program
- Cold Lake and Bonnyville Community Outreach Offices
- Public Education Program

Here are the ways you can make a donation:

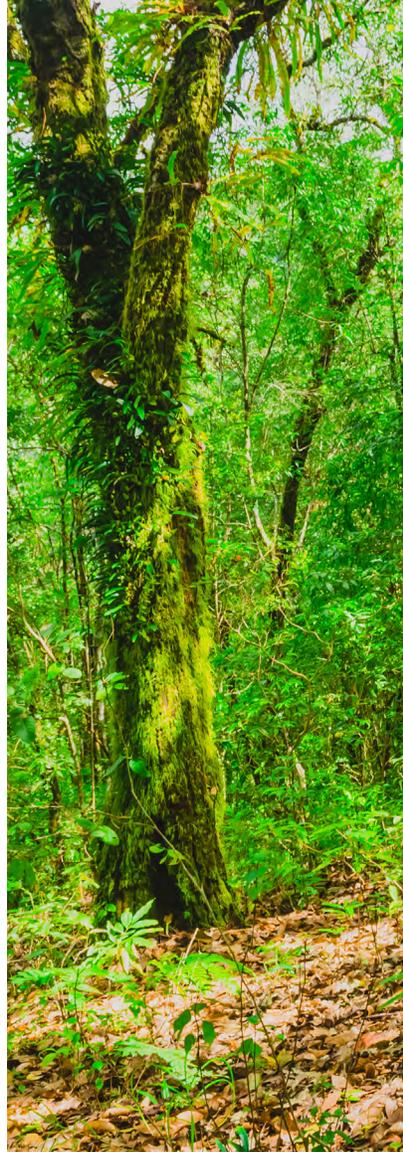
- Online Donation
- Cash Donations
- In-Kind Donations
- Become a Member



dmscc.ca/donate

Your support is absolutely critical.





DR. MARGARET SAVAGE Crisis Centre



www.dmscc.ca

CONTACT US

We are proud partners in our communities, and we invite you to contact us with any questions, ideas or requests.

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