DR. MARGARET SAVAGE
Crisis Centre



Annual Report
2021-2022



Our Vision

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



Contents

01 Message from the Executive Director

03 Client Story

07 About the DMSCC

09 Programs

17 Social Enterprise

19 Board of Directors

20 Management Team

21 New Build

23 Fund Development







Message from the Executive Director

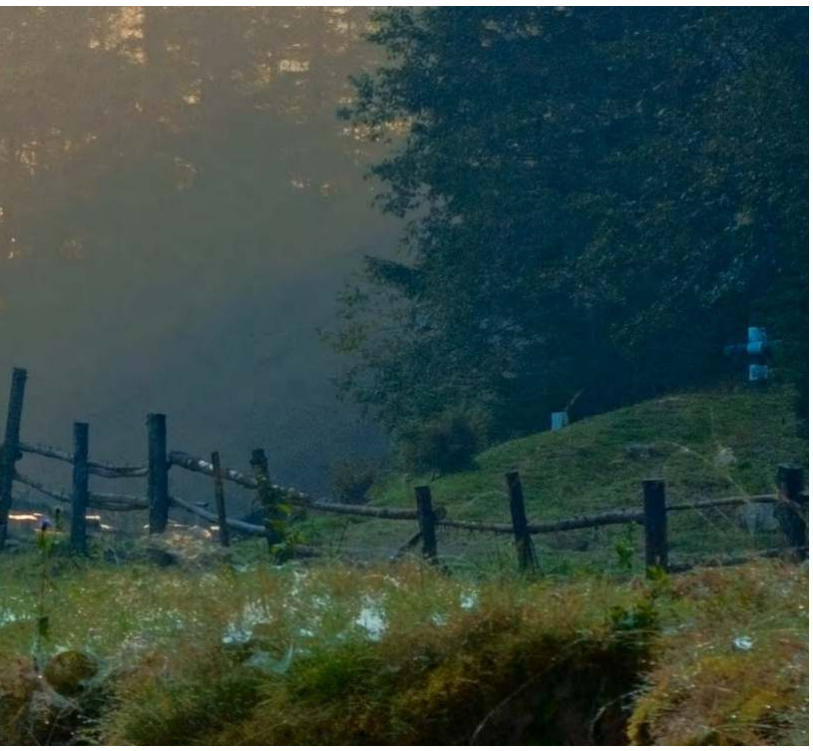
Susan White

While this past year has been as challenging for the DMSCC as it has for so many others, it has given us the opportunity reflect, evaluate and grow as an agency.

This pandemic has highlighted several barriers within both our programs and our physical spaces. Our emergency shelter was built over 30 years ago and due to the layout of the building, we have had to limit some of our shared spaces, which in turn meant that we were unable to accommodate all of those who needed our services.

This, together with a marked increase in demand, has meant that we have had to turn many families away. While our team works tirelessly to find other accommodations for-these families, it has highlighted the need for increased space and programing in our region. Since expanding our existing shelter is not financially feasible, we have embarked on a journey to bring all of our programs together under one roof, truly embracing our 'continuum of care' philosophy, while streamlining many administrative expenses.

I am excited to announce that our new building will significantly increase our capacity in all areas. This will be a building that is fully Trauma Informed and energy efficient. It will have spaces for collaboration with other agencies and well as community spaces, but most importantly it will have the space to support all of those who need our help.









We are extremely grateful to have received a Federal Grant and amazing support from the City of Cold Lake that allows us to start construction very soon, and we hope to gain enough support from our local community to bring us across the finish line of our funding goal!

Once again, we could not continue to do the amazing work that we do or embark on this journey to the new build without the dedication of our entire staff team. This team continues to demonstrate flexibility, compassion, and dedication to providing the best possible services to those accessing our agency and I am incredibly thankful and proud to work alongside such an inspiring group.

Client Story



**Names have been changed*

My story is not one that I thought was "conventional" until I realized how many women go through the same as I did – when the abuse started, it didn't even resonate with me because it wasn't physical at the start at all – it was all mental and emotional, and I didn't recognize that as abuse.

I met Ben* in 2006 - on the day I decided to divorce my then-husband. I was swept off my feet by Ben, and it was love at first sight. My relationship with Ben moved fast. Within two months, he was staying with me, and though it did feel fast, it did feel good and right at the time.

Four months into living together, the whirlwind romance began to wear off, and I began to question the truthfulness in the things he said, and started to realize all the lies he was telling me. Ben had told me that he owned his own company, shared details about investments he held, and gave no indication that any of this would be untrue.

I had received a settlement from my divorce earlier, and thought everything was okay with our finances. A year after living together, I had to declare bankruptcy. All the money from my divorce settlement was gone, and I realized that Ben never owned his own company, and that all his investments were a lie. He had not been truthful with me at all, and painted a picture of what I wanted to see and hear.
I was ready to leave, but then found out I was pregnant with our first child together. I felt stuck, but I wanted to give Ben a chance to change, like he said he would.

We decided to get a house together in Cold Lake, and this is when I realized that his lies were continuing. He was in charge of paying the rent, and it wasn't until I started maternity leave that I realized he wasn't actually going to work, and that the rent had not been paid. The landlord would knock on the door and Ben would always tell them I'm sick to avoid them. Ben lied about working and had constant mood swings. Ben eventually came clean and said he wasn't paying the rent, and we were promptly evicted.

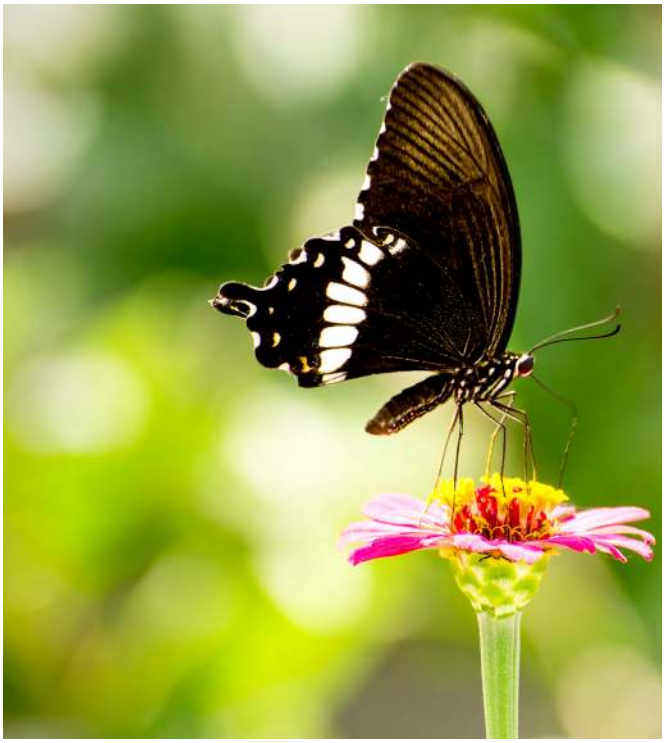
This was the first time I came to stay at the Shelter. I have two kids with my ex-husband with whom I had a good relationship when it came to our kids, and so the two oldest went to stay with their dad, and I went to the Shelter with my new two-month old. Though my ex took the kids in, he made me feel so much guilt and blamed me for putting our kids through this.

My stay at the Shelter was needed more than I realized. I got the chance to cook, got a chance to breathe, and take a minute to myself. The staff were caring and listened and never pushed me to talk as I was really shy then, but the connections I got to make were amazing. I was connected with low-income housing, and things were going really well.



Ben then came back, and wanted to make things work. At first, we agreed that Ben would stay with his parents, but he eventually talked me into moving in together, and so we did. I left my low-income housing, and we got a place together, but within three days, I could tell Ben hadn't changed.

When we moved into our new place, he paid the first month's rent by cheque knowing it would bounce and was committing fraud without my knowledge, but left the house as soon as he dropped the cheque so I had to deal with the questions. Three days after moving in, we had to move back out. Luckily, my low-income unit was still available and they let me move back in.



I found out I was pregnant again with our second child together. When he realized that I was leaving him again, he tried to commit suicide, and I found him. He was screaming and yelling, and this time, he tried to strangle me. I'm sad to say that I felt like I deserved it at the time, and so I didn't tell anyone until eventually I had to go to the police. I was terrified, but I needed a no contact order.

Client Story Continued

That led to my second shelter stay as I didn't want him to find me. This is when I realized that he would never change and that his mental health was no excuse to abuse me the way he did. Consistently throughout our relationship, Ben lied. He lied about his past relationships, he lied about his work, his job, and I quickly realized that I wasn't his first partner to be treated like this.

Ben lied so much throughout our relationship, from money, to his job, and even lied to say that I hit him. That made me angry because it made me feel that I might lose custody of my kids. Even though Children's Services came and investigated and determined nothing was wrong, it was traumatizing and humiliating to go through the process. When I tried to date after my relationship with Ben, he threatened to hurt him. Ben even went as far as lying about his daughter, saying she had passed away when she hadn't.



Ben left Alberta while I was at the Shelter the second time. It gave me a chance to set my kids back up and help them get back on their feet. Ben returned a year later, and we reconciled, it didn't work, but I feel stronger and empowered in my decision to leave.



During my second stay at the Shelter I was connected with other resources, and was invited back as an Outreach client. The Shelter set me up with a Holiday Helper which was an amazing relief. At this point, I was a single mom to 4 kids, and despite everything, we had an amazing Christmas. A Christmas dinner hamper was given to us, and each of my kids had 4 or 5 gifts to open, and there were even goodies for me. We felt so spoiled. It was the most emotional and enlightening experience I've ever had.

Staying at the Shelter both times gave me the tools to feel strong and empowered, and it helped me realize that his behaviour was beyond my control. Ben gaslit me by telling me he wouldn't treat me the way he does if I gave him support instead of calling out his lies. He would propose to me if he thought I was angry. It was always about money for him. Every time he came back, he would drain all my finances, leaving me to restart and rebuild each time.

Looking back, staying at the shelter, and knowing that other people go through this made me feel stronger, and it gave me the strength to know that I could do this. The DMSCC gave me a safe place when I needed, and a place to breathe and get away.

I had thought about going back to him several times, especially because we have children, and the abuse was never physical at the start, but I realize that I deserve so much better that to be gaslit, abused, and to be humiliated through his lies.
I know Ben had experienced mental health challenges and traumas in his own life, and so did I. I grew up in the foster care system, and I know that it's not an excuse for the abuse.

I'm happy to share that I'm in a much different place than I was. I'm in a healthy and happy relationship. We set goals together and discuss our future. We are planning on moving into a new place together next week, and I am happy. I am safe.



About the DMSCC

Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre

We are a non-profit organization that offers:

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.

Over 112,000 safe bednights provided.

24-hour Helpline offering confidential support, information, and referrals to anyone who calls.

Community Support Program in both Cold Lake and Bonnyville that offers 1:1 supports and outreach services to all community members who are struggling with an unhealthy or abusive relationship or have left one.

Public Education, bringing community awareness and education about family violence to the Lakeland area.



Vision

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



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.

Values

Integrity

Offer support without judgment.

Respect

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

Knowledge

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.

24 Hour Helpline: 780-594-3353

More about us...

Founded
1982

Employees
47

Hours of Operation
24 / 7 / 365

Main Office
Cold Lake, AB

Executive Director
Susan White

Outreach Offices
Bonnyville, AB
Cold Lake, AB







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 helpline was ringing off the hook. **Calls were up 49% from last year, to 2,325.** This spike back to pre-pandemic numbers indicates that many people in the last few years may have been isolated, and unable to reach out for help.

We are ready for an influx of calls as life returns to normalcy. We are here for our community twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, three hundred and sixty-five days per year.

24 Hour Helpline: 780-594-3353

Toll Free: 1-866-594-0533



Emergency Shelter

The DMSCC 27-bed emergency shelter continues to serve our community, helping those in need. This year we successfully navigated many logistical challenges brought on by shifting government regulations and **provided 2,086 safe bed nights.** This was an **increase of 27% from last year** and signals a large first step on our path back to full capacity.

Our shelter supports an average of 173 women, and 132 children each year, with an average stay length of 8 days.

Our in-house school continues to provide invaluable support to students during their time here at the shelter. **This year our school provided 119 student days, which is an increase of 164% over last year's numbers.**

Contact our Helpline at 780-594-3353 to learn more about our Emergency Shelter.





Pet Housing

Pet Housing continues to gain traction, further reducing barriers for women to leave an abusive partner.

56% of women delayed their decision to leave an abusive relationship due to fear of a pet's safety, 89% of abused women reported that their partner also abused a pet.

Thanks to our Pet Housing, staying in our shelter is now an option for many women who would have been unable to do so in the past.



Spiritual Room

We are proud to announce that our non-denominational Spiritual Room turned one this year.



It continues to provide a calming, spiritual space for smudging, reflection, healing, and faith-based practices.



This space helps to ensure that our community members are connected to their culture, identity, faith, and spirituality during their healing journey.

Holiday Helpers

Our community really pulled through during the holidays this year.

Several of the families staying at our shelter, along with three families from Joie's Phoenix House, all benefited from the Holiday Helpers program.

Each family received holiday meals and gifts according to need.

We appreciate the generosity of the Holiday Helpers in our community.

It's never too early to become a Holiday Helper! Call 780-343-0438 today.



LuvPak

We have just been approached by LuvPak Lakeland, who has offered to provide LuvPaks to our shelter for the children accessing our services.



These are backpacks filled with toys and other sensory tiems. The packs have been designed to meet immediate physical, emotional, and psychological needs, and to provide a sense of self-worth, comfort, and hope to children during a time of crisis.



Joie's Phoenix House

JPH is a second stage housing program with 6 fully furnished apartments designed specifically for women with their children who are leaving a domestic violence situation.

The program is framed around self-empowerment and gives families the opportunity to work closely with our Family Support Workers, and with our Child and Family Counsellor to learn life skills and navigate resources. The goal for families in the JPH program is to transition into successful, independent community living after completing our program.

This year the JPH program was a safe home for **10 women**, and **17 children** as they worked toward healing and independence.

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



Our Child and Family Counsellor administered **148 adult sessions, and 48 child & youth sessions**. This was a **36% increase in sessions over last year**.

Capacity restrictions forced us to turn a few potential clients away from the JPH program this year. We connected those individuals with our Outreach Team for support and resources.

As housing prices continue to rise, finding affordable and safe housing for families leaving our program has become more challenging than ever before.

In January 2022 we rolled out the **new welcome basket** for JPH. One mom shared with staff, "When I saw the welcome basket, I nearly cried. It was the first time in a long time that I felt cared for."



Community Outreach

The Outreach program works one on one with **an average of 145 individuals from the Cold Lake and Bonnyville area each year**. This program provides free, confidential support with a trauma-informed lens to both men and women in our community.

This program also provides Public Education to the community, to other agencies, and to schools. All our public education follows the theme of empowering individuals through information, connection, and building life-skills. Some webinars our Outreach Team put out recently include sessions on Romance Scams, and on Internet Safety.

Official studies are starting to confirm that there were **huge increases in domestic violence across the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic, some studies even show increases as high as 50%**. Our Outreach Team has taken this as a call to action. They are out in our community daily working to make connections with local individuals, provide them with education, and connect them with the resources they need.

This year the Outreach Team **provided 168 referrals to local resources**. Engagement is on the rise, and the **rate of referrals per client this year has doubled.**

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

Coffee and Connect

We invite members of our community to come into our Bonnyville office for some conversation and coffee on the first Wednesday of each month.

Each session will feature an activity, which attendees are welcome to participate in. This program is designed to help individuals establish healthy friendships in our community.

Better Way

We revamped the Better Way program, which will launch in September of 2022 to serve both men and women. This program will continue to provide participants with the education, skills, and resources they require to make the necessary changes in their relationships and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Empowering Women

This program focuses on self-and-female empowerment to increase self-worth, self-esteem, and work on both soft skills and hard skills.

Sessions can include physical and mental health, wellness, managing money, healthy relationships, sexual health, and more.



Community Kitchens

Community Kitchens has grown since its inception in 2019. Food insecurity is a prominent issue in our region.



Our Second Helping program thrived this year. Enabled by the Second Harvest Grant, **we delivered 3,844 delicious and nutritious meals to families in our local community**.



We are proud to announce establishing several partnerships with local schools, where some children rely on the meals available at school for their one healthy meal of the day.

We expect the need for the Second Helping program to grow as grocery prices continue to skyrocket at a catastrophic rate. Food itself is becoming less and less accessible to low-income households, and nutritious food is no longer a realistic option for many families in our community.



Keep an eye out for the relaunch of our in-person Community Kitchens classes.



Healthy Babies

This initiative provides support for expecting mothers and new mothers in our community by working in partnership with the local Health Unit.

This year the Healthy Babies program provided **843 fruit and vegetable coupons, 1,405 milk coupons to local moms, in addition to a supply of pre-natal vitamins.**





This program helps an average of **172 local mothers** each year.

Healthy Babies also provides new and expecting moms with education.





Moms are facing food insecurity now more than ever. Many expecting mothers lack access to nutrition essential to the development of their baby.

Items Needed: Neonatal Vitamins, Formula, Baby Wipes, Baby Bath Wash, Baby Lotion, Baby Washcloths, Diapers, Maxi Pads, Breast Pads, Diaper Cream, Breast Nipple Cream

Please call 780-343-0438 to donate items to this program.

Social Enterprise

Orbiting TRENDS

We created Orbiting Trends in the early 90s to generate funds for Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre programs.

Orbiting Trends provides donated clothing and supplies free of charge to DMSCC clients in crisis.

The 3,000 square foot retail location in Cold Lake, Alberta is generously stocked daily with gently used clothing and household goods donated by our community.
We sell items that are not immediately needed by our shelter guests and 100% of those proceeds go toward supporting DMSCC programs.

We are proud to offer free clothing to our vulnerable population at no charge.

Our annual Kozy Kids program also provides free winter coats and gear to children in need.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we supported the community alongside partner organizations by distributing items to those in need.

Our online auctions continue to be successful and well received by the community. We ended 2021 with a strong finish and the future is looking bright.

Donation Items Needed:

furniture, décor items, linens, and small appliances.



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





A little-known fact is that Dr. Savage's first given name was Ella.

Ella's Closet - Consignment for Your Community is the second retail venture owned and operated by the DMSCC in Cold Lake. Ella's Closet is known for carrying high quality, upscale secondhand brand names.

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

This store is an outlet for raising money for all registered charities, non-profit organizations and schools in Cold Lake. We are currently partnered with over 30 local charities.

This year we had a healthy flow of incoming donations from wonderful individuals giving back to our community.

Ella's Closet celebrated its second-year anniversary in the summer of 2021.

Social Enterprise

Hours

Monday: 5-5
Tuesday: 5-5
Wednesday: 5-5
Thursday: 5-6
Friday: 5-5
Saturday: 5-5

Closed On Sundays & Stat Holidays.

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





Board of Directors



Emily Allsop
President



Cathy Orr
Vice President



Jeannette Lange
Secretary



Leona Kolbinson
Treasurer



Audrey Cochrane
Director



Megan Jones
Director



Joely Patrick
Director



Rhonda Squire
Director

Management Team



Susan White

Executive Director



Della Nash

Executive Assistant



Stephanie Nieman

Director of Programs



Cindy Yang

Director of Strategic Priorities



April Simard

Social Enterprise Coordinator



Heather Breed

Child and Family Counsellor



Mikayla Veinot

Program Coordinator

New Build

We're excited to share with you our plans to embark on a new build, which will see an amalgamation of all our programs and services under one building. The need to support survivors and victims of family violence and intimate partner violence is as prevalent as ever, and the need to build strengthened over the past few years.

The new Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre building will provide a safe and welcoming, healing space to empower its clients, staff, and the community.









The building will embrace trauma-informed principles to create a healthy, and sustainable facility that respects cultural diversity and effects change to reduce family violence and family crisis.

Need for this new build has been further exemplified through the pandemic, and we're grateful for the opportunity to bring this to fruition, and we're just getting started.

We're looking forward to sharing more with our supportive community!


re
ima
gine


re
ima
gine

Fund Development

As the chaos of recent years passes and our world returns to a semblance of normality, it is clearer than ever before that humanitarian programs must be built upon sturdy foundations. In the event of widespread crisis and uncertainty, we must be prepared to face a spike in the need for our services. In the case of Domestic Violence, recent years have isolated survivors with their abusers, and caused up to a 50% increase in DV rates. This means that for the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre, the work has only just begun. It is realistic to expect a significant increase in demand for services like the DMSCC over the upcoming years.

This is where you come in. While programs like the DMSCC are partially funded by the government, we rely on the generous contribution of local donors just like you to close the funding gap. You have the power right now to make an impact on the lives of local abuse survivors.

Did you know to give monthly you just have to sign up once? Ongoing monthly support will provide a stable, and reliable system of support for people in our community who need your help. Please set up a monthly investment today.

How to give?

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

dmscc.ca/donate

What will your donation achieve?

Sign up for **$25 per month** and know that you are providing food, necessities, and a warm, safe place to stay for a one local woman in crisis each month.

Sign up for **$40 per month** to celebrate 40 years of the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre serving our community.

Sign up for **$50 per month** to facilitate a Healthy Relationship presentation to a school or community group.

Sign up for **$100 per month** and know that you are providing four hours of support on our 24/7 Helpline.

Your donation will go toward:

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

Why give monthly?

- The satisfaction of knowing you are helping women and children in your community.
- Charitable tax receipts. Why pay more in taxes when you can use the funds to directly improve your own community?
- You will receive quarterly digital newsletter updates from the DMSCC.
- Monthly giving is the #1 best way to help the DMSCC serve our community.
- Automatically become a DMSCC member and receive the associated benefits.



Become a Member

dmscc.ca/membership

Benefits

- Quarterly Newsletter
- Voting privileges at the annual AGM and special meetings.
- Eligibility to apply to become a board member.
- Discount on event tickets and community training.
- The amazing feeling that comes with creating safety and support for members in our community who are experiencing crisis.

Membership Cost

$20 per year



Your support is absolutely critical.

DR. MARGARET SAVAGE

Crisis Centre

CONTACT US

dmscc.ca

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

T: (780) 594-5095

F: (780) 594-7304

E: info@dmscc.ca

Box 419
Cold Lake,
Alberta
T9M 1P1