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digital report

STEPPING STONES  
**Crisis Society**

Annual Report  
**2022-2023**

# Our Vision

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





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## Message from the Executive Director

### Susan White

Forty years ago some very inspiring community members incorporated the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre. It is amazing to see how far this organization has come, not just in size, but also in the scope of our understanding of domestic violence and the services we offer. The dedication and compassion of past and present Boards and staff have seen us grow to support our clients to overcome the many barriers that they face, with a focus on empowerment and overcoming the effects of trauma.

In recognition of this incredible growth, both past and future, the DMSCC has rebranded itself as Stepping Stones Crisis Society. This new name more clearly speaks to the -



- scope of our organization and our dream of building a continuum of care, free from judgement but full of empowerment for all survivors of domestic violence.

We are eternally grateful for the work of incredible women like Dr. Ella Margaret Savage and will continue to honor her throughout our organization and in all we do.

I am so excited to be able to lead the incredible team at Stepping Stones in the construction of what we believe is a model for the future of our goal to support survivors of domestic violence to their full potential and allow them to finally leave their trauma behind them.



As a team, we dared to dream big! And with that, we began the civil work for our new complex at the end of this fiscal year, with our official ground-breaking to take place mid-July. It has taken almost two years to get to this point and will likely take close to two more before we are able to move in, but it will be worth it.

Phase one of our new building will bring three of our locations into one and add a multitude of further supports and opportunities for community collaboration. Not only will it allow us to more than double our capacity, but it will streamline administrative costs and allow us to better serve our community. Phase two will add much needed safe, affordable housing for our families as well as a trauma informed daycare to further support the healing and development of the young children in our programs. By making this building extremely energy efficient, and net zero ready, we will also reduce future expenses.

We were both honored and excited to have been asked to present on this vision and our project, by Canadian Women's Foundation in Ottawa and again at the Leading Change Summit in Edmonton.

As we move forward with our Capital Campaign to raise the remaining funds to complete this incredibly important project, I am confident that both government and community partners will see the importance of this project and provide their support. Together, we really can make a lasting difference on so many lives!

# About Stepping Stones

We are a non-profit organization offering free, confidential services.

**Over 115,000**  
safe bednights  
provided.

Our 27-bed **Emergency Shelter** is committed to providing emergency accommodations to women and their children in need, offering a safe and secure environment for those fleeing abusive situations.

**Joie's Phoenix House** is a Second Stage Housing Program that provides secure and wrap around services for families who have left abusive relationships.

Our 24 hour **Helpline** provides confidential support, information, and referrals to anyone seeking assistance.

Our **Community Support Program**, with offices in both Cold Lake and Bonnyville, provides one-on-one support and outreach services to community members experiencing or recovering from an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

Our organization is committed to bringing awareness and education about family violence to the Lakeland area through our **Public Education** initiatives.



STEPPING STONES  
**Crisis Society**



# 24 Hour Helpline: 780-594-3353

## More about us...

### Incorporated

1983

### Employees

49

### Hours of Operation

24 / 7 / 365

### Main Office

Cold Lake, AB

### Executive Director

Susan White

### Outreach Offices

Bonnyville, AB  
Cold Lake, AB

## 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.



## 2022-2023 Stats

**158  
Women**

**153  
Children**

**169  
Individuals  
could not  
be admitted  
due to  
capacity**

## Our Programs

### Emergency Shelter

The Stepping Stones emergency shelter remains a vital resource for our community, providing a safe haven for those in need. **This year we provided 3,430 safe bed nights, an increase of 64% over last year.**

Our shelter served **287 people** last year, **149 women** and **138 children**, with an **average stay length of 12 days** - a **50% increase** from the previous year. Sadly, because we did not have enough space, we were unable to offer a bed to 162 women and children, who needed a safe place

Our in-house school continues to be a vital resource when children are unable to attend school due to distance or safety issues. This year, we provided **113 student days**, offering educational support and stability to children during a time of great upheaval.

We remain dedicated to providing comprehensive support and resources to all those in need in our community.

Contact our Helpline at

**780-594-3353**

to learn more about our  
Emergency Shelter.

# Joie's Phoenix House Second Stage Housing Program

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The JPH program is a safe and empowering space for women and their children leaving inter partner abuse situations. Our Family Support Workers work closely with families to help them navigate resources and strengthen their life skills, with the goal of transitioning into successful, independent community living after completing our program.

Our Child and Family Clinician provides crucial support to our clients through both adult and child/youth sessions. The demand for these critical services continues to grow.

Due to limited space, we are unable to house all of the families who apply for the program. We do, however, connect with them and provide them with support and resources through our Outreach Team.

As always, finding affordable and safe housing for families leaving our program remains a challenge. However, we are committed to helping our clients find stable and secure housing solutions, and we remain grateful for the ongoing support of our community in achieving this goal.

For more information  
on **Joie's Phoenix  
House**, please contact  
our **Helpline** at:

**780-594-3353**





# Helpline

Our 24 hour helpline is a critical resource for our community, offering crisis intervention, safety planning, referrals, advocacy, shelter services, and general information.

**This year, we received 2,323 calls.** These numbers continue to show that as we move away from the pandemic's restrictions, our community members are now more able to seek help when facing crisis.

We will continue to provide our services twenty-four hours a day to anyone who is facing crisis or needs support.



## 24 Hour Helpline: 780-594-3353



# Community Outreach

Our Outreach program continues to be a vital resource for our community. Through one-on-one support, we empower individuals with the tools and resources they need to navigate their challenging situations. Our Outreach team also provides public education to community members, other agencies, and schools. Our workshops and webinars aim to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to build healthy relationships and recognize signs of abuse.

This year, the Outreach team worked with **45 clients** provided **87 referrals** to local resources and connected individuals to support services in our community. Our engagement with community members is on the rise, as more individuals turn to us for help and support. Our team is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone, with a focus on trauma-informed care.

We know that reaching out for help can be difficult, which is why we're here to offer free, confidential support to both men and women in our community. Our Outreach program is dedicated to empowering individuals to make informed choices, build resilience, and create a better future for themselves and their families.

## New Bonnyville Office Location

Our Bonnyville Outreach office is made possible through a gift from Inter Pipeline, and we have moved to a new location. Call now to book an appointment.

**Contact Outreach at:**  
**780-594-3353**  
[outreach@SteppingStonesSociety.ca](mailto:outreach@SteppingStonesSociety.ca)



## Public Education

To book a free, public education session, or for more information on our services, please contact Cindy Yang at:  
[priorities@steppingstonesociety.ca](mailto:priorities@steppingstonesociety.ca)

## Better Way

Re-launching in September, the Better Way program offers education, skills, and resources for both men and women to make positive changes in their relationships and resolve conflicts peacefully.

## Empowering Women

Our Empowering Women program focuses on self-empowerment and increasing self-worth, self-esteem, and building soft and hard skills. Sessions cover various topics such as physical and mental health, wellness, managing money, healthy relationships, and sexual health.

# Healthy Babies

Our Healthy Babies program is a vital resource for new and expecting mothers in our community, providing support and education to help ensure healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. With the ongoing challenges of food insecurity, access to nutrition is more important than ever.

Through our program, we are able to help an average of 172 local mothers each year. Our focus is on providing access to essential resources, such as fruit and vegetable coupons, milk coupons, and pre-natal vitamins, to help support the health and well-being of both mother and baby.

In addition to these resources, we also provide education on a range of topics related to maternal and infant health, such as nutrition, breastfeeding, and safe sleeping practices. Our goal is to empower new and expecting mothers with the knowledge and tools they need to ensure the best possible outcomes for themselves and their babies.

As we continue to face ongoing challenges in our community, we are proud to be able to provide this essential support to new and expecting mothers in need. We look forward to continuing to serve our community through this important program. While this program is partially funded, it would not be possible without the generous support of Inter Pipeline!

## WANT TO HELP?

**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.**

## 2022-2023 Healthy Babies Stats

**148**  
Local  
Mothers

**2,235**  
Fruit &  
Vegetable  
Coupons

**3,207**  
Milk  
Coupons



# Community Kitchens

Food insecurity continues to be a pressing issue in our region, and Community Kitchens remains committed to addressing this challenge. Since its inception, our Community Kitchens programs have been fully funded by the wonderful people at Inter Pipeline.

## Second Helping Program

In addition to the funds received from Inter Pipeline, the Second Helping program received additional support from the Second Harvest Grant, which allowed us to provide **3,235 delicious and nutritious meals** to families in our community.

## Community Kitchens Program

We are excited to report the successful continuation of our in-person Community Kitchens classes, which are currently running at our Joie's Phoenix House Program. We held **8 sessions** this year, with **35 participants** benefiting from hands-on cooking experience, meal planning, and nutrition education. We are working to form additional partnerships to provide resources and skills to help community members overcome food insecurity.

As grocery prices continue to rise, making nutritious food less accessible to struggling households, the need for programs like Second Helping and Community Kitchens becomes even more critical. We are determined to expand our reach and impact, working collaboratively with our community partners to ensure that every family in our community has access to healthy and affordable food options.

Keep an eye out for updates on our funding situation, new partnerships, and the expansion of our programs. Together, we can build a healthier and more resilient community.



# What Stepping Stones Means to Those Who Need It

“The staff were positively wonderful and helpful. The communication, resource help, and their attentive support for me and my children exceeded my expectations. All services provided were great”

“I am overwhelmed with the love and support I received. I truly hope that shelters accepting animals become more widespread. Our animals are cherished members of our families, and they deserve to be able to stay with us.”

“Stepping Stones gave me a place to stay and counseling when I felt like I had nowhere to go.”

“Stepping Stones gave me a safe place for my dogs and me to go. They provided an ear to listen, helped me understand my options, and even provided a hot meal for me along with food for my dogs. I can’t express how thankful I am.”

“One of the most valuable aspects of my experience was speaking to an outreach worker. I deeply appreciated all the help and support I received from the entire staff, especially in regard to my children.”

“I had a safe place to find security and regain stability. It provided a protective environment for my children and I, and I also received valuable counseling.”

## Pet Housing

We're proud to continue our commitment to providing innovative solutions to the challenges faced by survivors of abuse. Our Pet Housing program has been a true success story, helping to break down barriers for women who may have otherwise felt trapped in an abusive situation due to concerns for the safety of their furry family members.

Statistics show that **56% of women delay leaving an abusive relationship because they fear for their pet's safety**. And even more alarming, 89% of abused women report that their partner also abused a pet.

At Stepping Stones, we recognize the importance of keeping pets and their owners together during times of crisis, and we are proud to offer a solution that allows women to seek shelter while keeping their pets safe and nearby.



## Spiritual Room

We are honored to have a non-denominational Spiritual Room as a permanent fixture in our shelter. This space has become an integral part of our mission to support the holistic healing of our community members.



The Spiritual Room provides a safe and welcoming space for individuals to engage in practices that promote spiritual well-being, cultural connection, and personal growth. From smudging to prayer, this space is dedicated to the diverse spiritual needs of our community.

We recognize the importance of honoring each person's unique beliefs and understand that faith and spirituality can play a significant role in the healing process. Our Spiritual Room is just one of the many ways we strive to ensure that every community member feels supported and empowered on their healing journey.

# Family Violence Prevention Month

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November is Family Violence Prevention Month (FVPM) in Alberta. It is a time to increase awareness of the warning signs of family violence and the resources and supports available so we can work together to end family violence and build healthier relationships in our communities.

**One woman or girl is killed every 48 hours in Canada, most are killed by men.**

**Children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from non-violent homes.**

**The taxpayer has spent 7.4 billion to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone.**

Crime facts provided by the Canadian Women's Foundation.

# Candlelight Vigil

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Each year, as part of our ongoing commitment to raising awareness about family violence and supporting its victims, we host a poignant Candlelight Vigil. This special event is not just a simple gathering; it's a time of remembrance, a time of healing, and a time of unity.



# Social Enterprise



**Orbiting**  
TRENDS

For over 30 years, Orbiting Trends has been a cornerstone of Stepping Stones fundraising efforts. Our thrift store provides vital support to our programs by offering free donated clothing and supplies to those in crisis.

Located in Cold Lake, Alberta, our 3,000 square foot store is always well-stocked with gently used clothing and household goods generously donated by our community. Items that are not immediately needed by our shelter guests are sold, with **100% of the proceeds going directly towards supporting Stepping Stones Crisis Society programs.**

In addition to our thrift store, we are proud to offer our annual Kozy Kids program which provides free winter coats and gear to children in need. This program ensures that every child in our community has access to warm clothing during the coldest months of the year.



We are excited to continue expanding our fundraising efforts in 2023 with new and innovative ideas. Keep an eye out for upcoming online auctions and other initiatives that support our mission of ending domestic violence in our community.

**WANT TO HELP?**  
**Donation Items Needed:**  
furniture, décor items, linens,  
and small appliances.

To become a donor, or volunteer your time, visit our Facebook [@orbitingtrends](#), find us on Instagram [@orbitingtrendz](#) or call 780-594-5777 ext. 1.



# Ella's Closet

Consignment for your community. Ella's Closet continues to be a thriving retail venture owned and operated by Stepping Stones in Cold Lake.

**Our store is known for carrying high-quality, upscale, secondhand, brand name ladies' clothing and accessories.**

This year, we are excited to have partnered with over 30 local charities, non-profit organizations, and schools in Cold Lake. **Our store is an outlet for raising money for all registered charities**, and our community has been incredibly generous in donating their gently used clothing and accessories.

As we enter our third year of operation, we are proud to continue to support our community by providing an avenue for donors to turn their closets into direct cash donations for local charities. Ella's Closet is committed to giving back to our community and looks forward to continuing to do so in the years to come.



## Social Enterprise Hours

Monday: 10-5

Tuesday: 10-5

Wednesday: 10-5

Thursday: 10-6

Friday: 10-5

Saturday: 10-5

Closed On Sundays  
& Stat Holidays.

To become a community donor, or to volunteer 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



Leona Kolbinson

Treasurer



Joely Patrick

Director



Rhonda Squire

Director



Megan Jones

Director



Bill Kraemer

Director

# Management Team



Susan White

Executive Director



Della Nash

Executive Assistant



Michelle Dargis

Director of Programs



Cindy Yang

Director of Strategic Priorities



April Simard

Social Enterprise Coordinator



Heather Breed

Child and Family Counsellor



Lorea Willington

Program Manager

# New Build

In 2020, plans were initiated to consolidate our three separate facilities into a single, more functional and accessible building. The existing structure wasn't meeting the needs of the community and the cost of bringing it up to code exceeded its value. A new construction would address our client's needs more effectively.

Our new build will consolidate our programs and services into one accessible location, thereby reducing the barriers for community members to access these services. The City of Cold Lake is backing our vision by providing a strategically located piece of land close to schools, healthcare facilities, businesses, and a transit line.

Although we've secured Federal and Provincial government funding for our project, the financial support is not sufficient to cover the entire cost of construction, which has been increasing, especially in Northern communities like Cold Lake. We are seeking community support and donations from those concerned about the domestic abuse issue that is a glaring, yet overlooked problem in our society. Our ambitious fundraising goal is \$15 million, a large amount, but essential for the cause we serve. Your generous contributions can make a significant difference and bring us closer to solving the problem of domestic violence.

Our plan for 2024 is to open a 50,000 square foot four-story building that can accommodate more than twice the number of clients we currently serve. The facility will be designed with shared spaces such as a childcare area, community kitchens, pet housing, and an in-house school for children unable to return to their regular school due to distance or safety concerns.



The building will also have community support spaces open to all who need them, regardless of whether they reside at the shelter. These spaces will feature private meeting rooms, training rooms, and a resource library to foster life skills and mental well-being.

Spiritual and cultural support will continue to be a crucial part of our operations. We'll provide safe spaces for practices such as smudging and prayers, which contribute to hope and healing.

The building will be designed according to trauma-informed principles to create calm and safe spaces that promote openness, light, and comfort. As a net-zero-ready building, it will feature green spaces, a healing garden, and a playground in the secure courtyard, enhancing the quality of life for all our facility residents.



**63**

Emergency  
Shelter Beds

Northern Exterior

Fenced Garden

**12**

Second-Stage  
Apartments





Second Stage  
Apartment

Kitchen

Living Room

**Adaptable**  
apartments for  
various family  
sizes



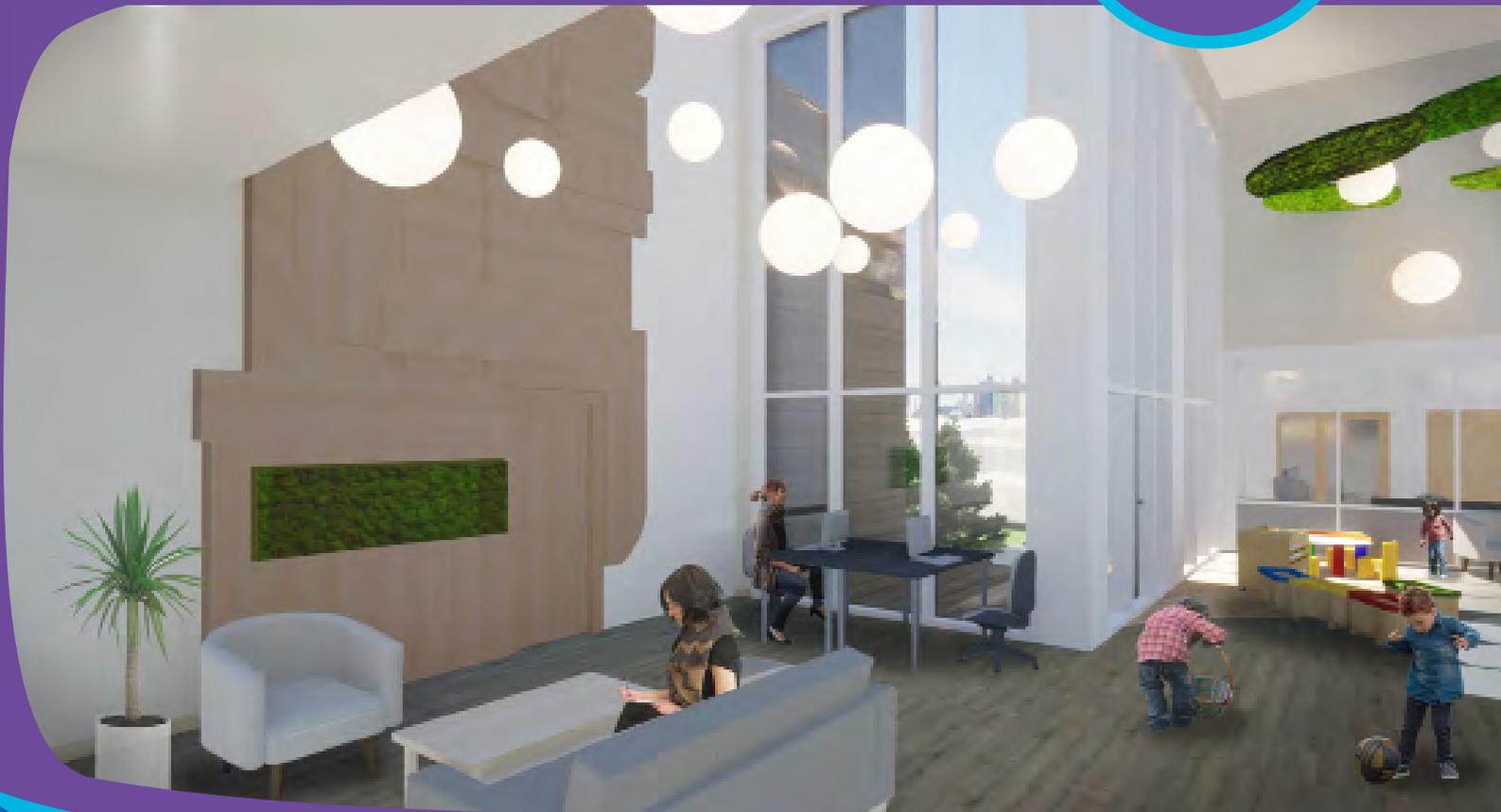


Emergency  
Shelter

Indoor Play Area

Lounge

**Accessible**  
Apartments  
and Shelter  
Rooms



# 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 **Stepping Stones Crisis Society**, the work has only just begun. We are already seeing an increase in demand for services like those offered by Stepping Stones.

This is where you come in. While programs like Stepping Stones 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 women and children.

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 consider a monthly investment today.

## How to give?

- Online Donation
- Cash Donations
- In-Kind Donations



[SteppingStonesSociety.ca/donate](https://SteppingStonesSociety.ca/donate)

## What will your donation achieve?

**\$25 per month** to provide the basic necessities for a night's stay in the emergency shelter.

**\$40 per month** to celebrate 40 years of the Stepping Stones Crisis Society serving our community.

**\$50 per month** will help cover the cost of a community or school presentation on healthy relationships.

**\$100 per month** will help maintain our 24 hour helpline, available to all men and women in our community.

## 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

## Become a member

- Vote at the SSCS Annual General Meeting



[SteppingStonesSociety.ca/membership](https://SteppingStonesSociety.ca/membership)

Since we  
opened  
our doors  
in 1982,

**We have provided:**

Shelter for **over 12,000 women**  
in need.

**Over 105,000 safe bed nights**  
for women and  
children in crisis,  
averaging **over 3,000 safe bed  
nights per year**  
over the last 10  
years.

“Personally, I  
feel honoured  
to support this  
project. As a  
community  
businessperson  
I recognize it is  
important and as  
a woman I know it  
is critical.”

– Generous donor to  
Stepping Stones Crisis Society

## Capital Campaign

### Join us in creating the Stepping Stones to Hope

Your generosity will help families in our community in what is often the scariest, darkest days of their lives.

**Commit to a multi-year pledge.**

**Give a one-time cash gift.**

**Donate stocks and securities.**

**Inspire others to join the campaign.**

**Contact us to discuss naming opportunities, including corporate sponsorship.**

There is an urgent need to care for our community members experiencing domestic abuse, and ensure our services are available across our region. With your help, **Stepping Stones Crisis Society** will secure \$15 million to meet our ambitious timeline and extend the continuum of care to include affordable housing and a trauma informed daycare.

Help the **Stepping Stones Crisis Society** be the safe refuge we need to be for the Cold Lake and the Lakeland area families that need us the most.

**To get involved,** please contact  
[priorities@SteppingStonesSociety.ca](mailto:priorities@SteppingStonesSociety.ca)



STEPPING STONES  
**Crisis Society**

[steppingstonesociety.ca](https://steppingstonesociety.ca)

**CONTACT US**



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

T: (780) 594-5095

F: (780) 594-7304

E: [info@steppingstonesociety.ca](mailto:info@steppingstonesociety.ca)

Box 419  
Cold Lake,  
Alberta  
T9M 1P1

Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre is now Stepping Stones Crisis Society