

ANNUAL REPORT

STEPPING STONES
CRISIS SOCIETY



20
24



STEPPING STONES
Crisis Society

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YEAR IN REVIEW

CLIENT STORY

*Names have been changed.

My story feels like it started like any other. Media and societal pressures warp our perception on healthy love, making it so much harder to recognize the red flags at first.

I met my abuser, Kyle*, during the pandemic. I was working more than 60 hours a week as a computer engineer, and was feeling lonely and isolated from being stuck in a loveless relationship with a partner who felt more like a roommate. During this time, my partner and I played video games online which is where I met Kyle. Kyle and I instantly felt a connection; he showered me with his attention and caring in ways my partner hadn't, and I finally felt seen. Even though we lived in different provinces and never had a chance to meet in person, Kyle and I developed feelings for each other. After telling my partner this, we ended our relationship. Kyle was ecstatic that we could now be together, and he showed up for me in excess calling me perfect and beautiful, and promising to give me everything I ever wanted in a relationship. **In hindsight, I realize this was love bombing.**

I grew up in a household with narcissists who held very traditional values that prioritized men and relationships. The narrative given to me was that it doesn't matter how good a man is to you, as long as you have one. This made me feel undervalued, and that I should be fortunate for any man who wants me.

Kyle's devoted attention to me worked. He told me all the things I wanted to hear with the promises of providing a future and a family. I packed up my things, and moved from my home province to be with Kyle. He monopolized all my time and attention, constantly staying in contact with me even when I was out with friends, saying all the right things. The love bombing gave me barely anytime to process what was happening, and **it can make you lose your grip on reality.**

The first few weeks of being together was amazing. **But then the red flags started to appear.** I relocated with close to \$70,000 in investments and savings, but Kyle felt emasculated that I was financially sound.

Near the end of our relationship, I had drained it all to make ends meet – from covering his racked-up credit cards, replacing things he broke of mine, and all the household bills and utilities. In hindsight, **it was all financial abuse, but I couldn't see it then.**

I wanted to head back to my home province, but he begged me to stay. Kyle couldn't hold down a steady job; he felt certain jobs were beneath him, so he would rather be unemployed than work. He lovebombed me, and promised me he would get it together for the sake of our future together, and I became pregnant with our son, River. I took out some savings, got us an apartment, and furnished it. I paid for Kyle's licensing so he could get a job. But Kyle never got it together. **I remember one of the first instances of physical violence** was when we had to go to the licensing office for Kyle that didn't go to plan. Kyle made a scene by screaming at the woman working there which shocked me. When we got in my car, he threw his phone at the windshield, and broke it. **There were no apologies.**



I was scared, and wanted to leave. I even considered terminating my pregnancy, but there were incredible barriers to access. My family downplayed the physical abuse because they thought I should be with the father of my baby. We relocated to Bonnyville near the end of my pregnancy, and I was applying for second jobs so that we could make ends meet, and so I could start saving again. In an effort to sabotage this, **Kyle would shut off the wifi halfway through my video calls**, or would break my things loudly in the background while I was on virtual meetings, which ultimately led to me losing those clients.

CLIENT STORY

I slowly started to pack my essentials and my important documents in preparation to leave. Kyle found out, and love bombed me again. He told me how much he loved me, promising all the right things: he would quit smoking recreational drugs, get a job, and treat me better. But it didn't get better. The abuse continued to escalate. Kyle wanted to use my phone to sell a TV so he could get nicotine, but I said no, so he forced it from me, and smashed it until it was broken. I was so angry because now I couldn't call my sister who I had been talking to daily as an escape, and now I couldn't take photos of my new baby once he comes. Kyle then started trashing the house. I remember grabbing a knife because I was so scared, pregnant, and without a phone. He grabbed the knife from me, and broke all the TVs in the house that I purchased. **Kyle always made sure to break things that were in my name**, like the internet router. I had a panic attack, and I was so worried about the baby I called my mom on Kyle's phone, and asked her to come get me. My family is wealthy, and they could have come to get me, but they said no.



Kyle took the phone, and spun the story. Kyle told her he had set up a bank account for me, and was paying for things, and was trying to take care of me, and that I was being ungrateful. The stress caused me to go into a complicated labour, requiring a C-Section and a longer recovery. When we checked into the hospital, the worker had asked if I was experiencing abuse. I said yes. They wrote it down, but I didn't receive any follow up. I didn't even get offered a social worker. They checked the baby, and **Kyle played the perfect man, but it was all for show**. Kyle took paternity leave even though we couldn't afford it. Even on paternity leave, he would wake me up to take care of River. I couldn't even take a shower without him bringing River in.

My parents ended up paying for counselling for three months. The counsellor thought Kyle was wonderful – she said that's how marriage to men is, downplaying the abuse. This devastated me. My family finally realized Kyle wasn't what he says, and got involved. As long as there were eyes on us, things were okay even though I was still carrying all the responsibility of the baby and the household.

My family's check ins stopped. My mom stopped paying for counselling, and things almost immediately regressed, Kyle went back to his abusive behaviours. **Often, he would take River if we fought, and in an effort to keep River safe in his arms, I had to be calm**. In one instance he threatened to leave with River, so I called the police. The police chalked it up to new parent exhaustion. I remember thinking I could eventually leave him if I could get a job after maternity leave, but he knew that too. **Kyle sabotaged my job interviews**. I tried taking courses in the evening, and Kyle told me if I went, he would keep River up until I got home. I ultimately stayed home so that River wouldn't be mistreated.

Things were so bad with Kyle not working, and overspending that I had to sell my things to buy baby formula. I even had to steal dish soap once to wash the baby's bottle because we had no money. Kyle wouldn't let me do anything that made me look good or feel good. I wasn't allowed to sleep in. I was at an all-time low - **the post-partum depression, the physical, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse, the lack of support - it nearly pushed me over the edge**. At one point, we had to borrow \$100 to get food for River, but before Kyle handed me the money, he told me to ensure there's enough left over for him to purchase recreational drugs. I ended up spending most of it on food for River. Kyle went through my purse (as he would often do), and lost it on me when there were only a few dollars left, and told me to return the food. I refused, and **he ripped the panel cover off the thermostat, and threw it across the room. It flew by River's head**. This was my breaking point. I didn't care what it cost me, or how much more debt I would be buried in.

CLIENT STORY

Kyle knew I was going to leave, so he took my credit cards, the car keys, and then kicked me out. I

decided to go the Shelter, but when I tried to take River, Kyle started breaking my things.

I texted my friend to call the police, and when they arrived, Kyle started swearing at the RCMP officer, telling her to get out because this was his house. I wanted to leave with the baby because Kyle weaponizes River. **The RCMP officer intervened and told Kyle to let me take River to shelter.** Kyle escalated verbally, and physically towards the RCMP, and they arrested him.

I arrived at the Shelter exhausted, not showered, sweaty, and didn't know what to expect. I ended up having a room to myself, and the workers brought a crib up for River. **The first night, I slept in for the first time that I could remember.**

My family wanted me to leave the shelter, and return to them with the baby, but I couldn't risk what would be considered as kidnapping my baby, which could result in my baby going into foster care and I might never see my baby again. **I got an emergency protection order.** It was mind boggling because people showed Kyle every empathy, and **I was not prepared for everyone to turn their back on me.** I was the bad guy for leaving. Even still, I refused to give up for River's sake.

At the Shelter one of the workers connected with me, and it made all the difference.



For the first time, I felt supported. She was warm, and friendly. It was through her that I decided to apply to Joie's Phoenix House (JPH), second-stage housing after my Shelter stay. It was a miracle and a relief to be able to explore resources, and have advocacy to access these resources. The house that Kyle was staying at was still in my name, and with the thousands of dollars of damage he caused, I would have never financially recovered, and it wrecked my rental history. It was hard to acknowledge for the first time that I was homeless. I was scared, and my self-esteem was in shambles. My family made me feel like this was all my fault. It wasn't all false – while Kyle abused me, I had stayed, even though I felt trapped.

The Shelter workers saw how much I love and care for River, I ended up getting into the JPH, and I felt SO blessed. **I often think what would've happened without JPH** - without friends, or family close, River would have ended up in foster care because I would have had to live in my car, and if I had went back to Kyle, **I wasn't getting a second chance to get out.**

I had cut ties with my family after some serious work and reflection. The worker continues to advocate for me and be on my side. It was the first time that I had someone on my side. When you're in this situation, people tell you how strong you are, but I'm just behaving strong because I have to endure this. But all I wanted to do was break and crumble. JPH offered me everything I needed to rebuild. I was able to get a car, obtain income supports, find a job, and come to realization that I am worth it. **People don't often understand that it's one thing to leave an abusive relationship, but getting out of poverty is a whole other challenge.**

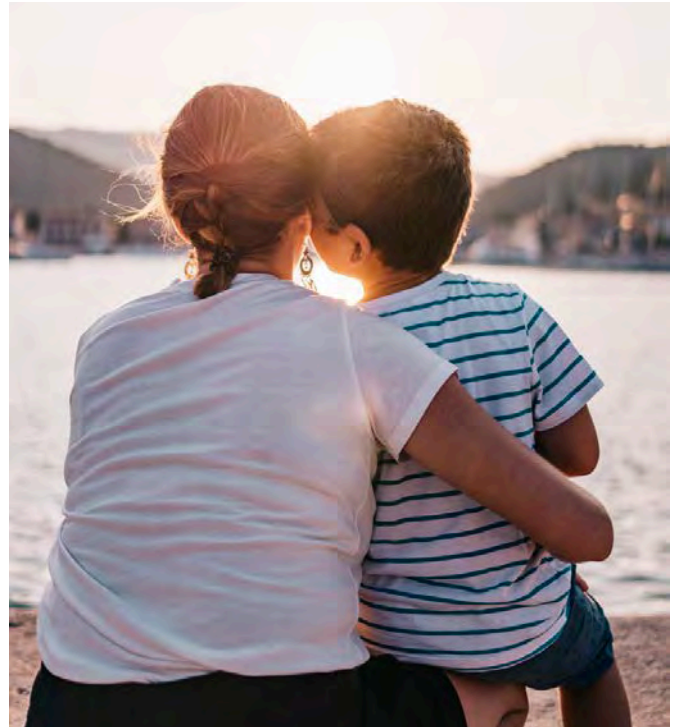
CLIENT STORY

The programming at JPH was so helpful because childcare was provided, and it also provided an opportunity to connect with the support workers, and other women staying in the program. It allowed me to find a friend for life.

It was so hard to rebuild alone and deal with the court. The system treats you like you're the problem; the court system was on Kyle's side. One of the terrible things about being a domestic violence victim is you can leave, you can get out, but unless he's physically hurt your child, he will have equal rights to your child. **People often say, "just leave", but what they don't see is the years following that you must navigate alone, and in the dark.** That you still must speak with him daily if they have access to your children. Thankfully, Kyle gave up, and left the province.

It was not easy, but I'm confident that the love I have for my son is what saved us both. I have learned how to set boundaries, and with the support of my workers, I am rebuilding my self-confidence. The workers really shape your experience. I learned about survival, and what I needed to do to save myself. Life after Kyle has given me a new outlook. I'm focused on nurturing my son, believing in myself, getting my career established, and things that kept me on the path that I know I need to be on. I understand why people take on unhealthy coping habits like drinking or drugs, because this was the hardest thing I've ever done.

The system's not perfect. **Anytime the system breaks, you're at their mercy, and your abuser knows that.** Without second stage housing and the team at Stepping Stones, I wouldn't have made it. I would have been a statistic.



Stepping Stones gave me a fresh start, and a place to allow myself to feel everything. I felt so relieved, and started practicing gratitude. **The road ahead is still an uphill battle as there's a lot of stigmas surrounding survivors of violence.** My credit score is ruined as a result of my abuser, but landlords don't understand that. JPH has been a miracle blessing with supporting me and my son – it's allowed me to rebuild my rental history amongst so many other things. **If this program didn't exist, I don't think I would be here to tell you my story today.** If I wasn't more resilient, my story would be so different.

I've learned along the way that I have to be the one that shows up for me. I wish someone told me that right from the beginning. I think that's why victims stay so long. **I have come a long way.**

Today, I am employed back in my field, rebuilding my savings, and working hard for a better future for River and me. **I am excited to see what our future brings.**

-Jennifer*, client to Stepping Stones Crisis Society

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS OF STEPPING STONES CRISIS SOCIETY,

As we mark the 42nd year of our organization's journey, I am thrilled to share with you the remarkable progress and achievements of Stepping Stones Crisis Society over the past year. What began four decades ago as the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre has blossomed into a multifaceted organization dedicated to providing comprehensive support to victims of domestic violence and at-need women in the Lakeland area.

We have proudly expanded beyond our origins as a women's shelter, now offering a full range of emergency services tailored to the diverse needs of the entire Lakeland Community. From our Women's Emergency Shelter and 24/7 Helpline to our Second Stage Housing, Outreach Programs, and Community Kitchen, each initiative is a testament to our commitment to holistic care and empowerment. Our Healthy Babies program and Social Enterprises further enrich the support network we provide, addressing critical needs with compassion and innovation.

In the past year alone, we have sheltered almost 400 women and children in our residential programs, providing nearly 4,300 safe bed nights. Despite our best efforts, the demand for our services continues to outpace our capacity, as evidenced by the heartbreaking fact that we were unable to provide beds for 332 women and children due to lack of space. This stark reality underscores the urgency of our ongoing capital campaign, "Building Better Futures," which aims to raise \$17.5 million to fund the construction of our new building, and to take us into next steps in the continuum of care needed to put an end to the cycle of domestic violence.

I am pleased to report that our vision for a brighter future is taking shape before our eyes, with construction of the new facility well underway. We have achieved a significant milestone, with over 30% progress made on the construction of our new building. Once completed, this transformative project will more than double our capacity, from 27 to 63 beds, and include 12 units of transitional housing, providing a lifeline to those in need for generations to come.



Our dedication to innovation and collaboration has also garnered national recognition, as evidenced by our participation in panels at prestigious events such as the CHRA's 56th National Congress on Housing and Homelessness, Canadian Women's Foundation's National Conference, and the Leading Change Conference hosted by Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. We're honoured to share our learnings with the sector.

Alongside partners like Women's Shelters Canada, we have shared insights and best practices, amplifying our collective voice in advocating for women-centered housing solutions and second-stage models.

As we look to the future, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our government, community partners, and dedicated staff. Together, we are building a better future where all individuals can thrive free from violence and fear. With your continued support, we will realize our vision of a community where everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity, safety, and hope.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey toward a brighter tomorrow.

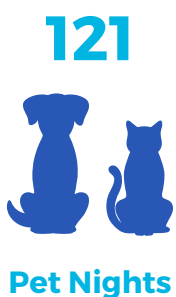
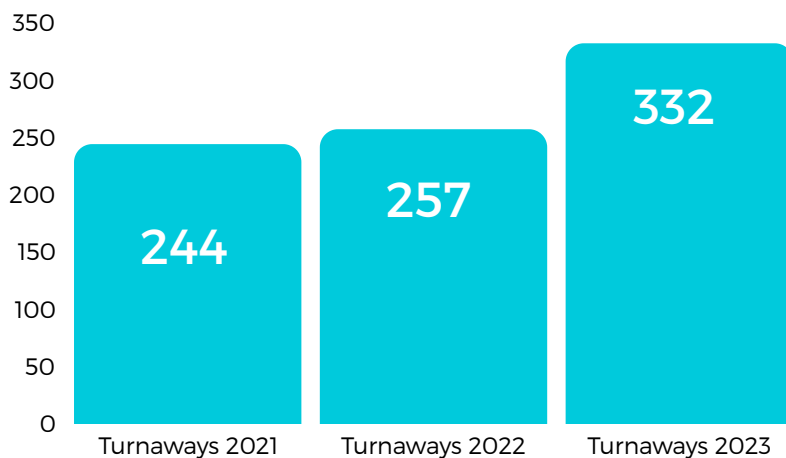
Susan White
Executive Director, Stepping Stones Crisis Society

OUR IMPACT LAST YEAR

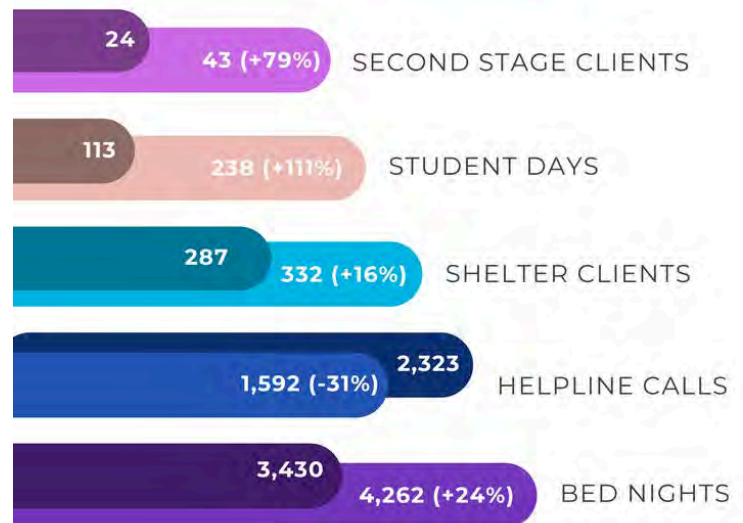
OUR COMMUNITY IS IN MORE NEED OF OUR SERVICES

During the past 12 months, most of our services have seen an increase in the number of women and children served.

With **832 more bed nights**, **45 additional shelter clients**, **19 more second stage clients**, and an increment of 125 student days, our team has been busier than ever.



YEAR VS. YEAR STATS



We have had to turn away more than 332 women and children in need of our shelter services, a concerning statistic that continues to motivate us to further expand our services. Sadly, the lack of availability is the primary reason behind these turnaways. This is why our project, "Building Better Futures," is so vital; it will allow us to help more than double the number of women and children in our community.

The overall increase in our other services, along with the rising number of turnaways each year, clearly indicates that the community's need for support has not diminished.

This persistent need for shelter and support services underscores the importance of our ongoing efforts to expand and improve our facilities, ensuring that we can provide the necessary assistance to those in our community who need it most.

SNAPSHOTS OF OUR YEAR



OUR BOARD MEMBERS



Emily Allsop
President



Cathy Orr
Secretary



Rhonda Squire
Vice President



Leona Kolbinson
Treasurer



Joely Patrick
Director



Ryan Howrish
Director



Armand Gagnier
Director



Torie Procinsky
Director

OUR MANAGEMENT TEAM



Susan White
Executive Director



Tolulope Mrsaiyesa
Controller



Lorie Nelder
Executive Assistant



Cindy Yang
Director of Strategic Priorities



Cheyenne Lemaigre
Program Director



Della Nash
Director of Finance



April Simard
Social Enterprises Manager



Jennifer Leblanc
Intensive Case Manager

STEPPING STONES CRISIS SOCIETY TIMELINE

1981 Emergency Shelter Opens

2014 Second-Stage Housing Opens

2016 Bonnyville Outreach Office Opens

2018 Food Services position created

2020 Pet Housing created / Teaching Kitchen of Outreach Building completed

2022 Name change to Stepping Stones Crisis Society

1983 Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre is incorporated.

2015 Resource Development Position Created

2017 Cold Lake Outreach Building completed / Renovations to Shelter Kitchen / Security upgrades

2019 Outdoor accessibility ramp added to Outreach Building / Ella's Closet Opens

2021 Spiritual Room completed

2023 Groundbreaking of new building project / opened 7th second-stage apartment.

Our Vision

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

We provide safe and secure shelter and supports 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.

Our Mission

Our Values

Integrity | Cultural Diversity | Change
Knowledgeable | Respect



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

MORE THAN A SHELTER STAY

OUR SERVICES

We are **much more than an emergency shelter**. Our multiple programs make us a complete support network in our community.

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.

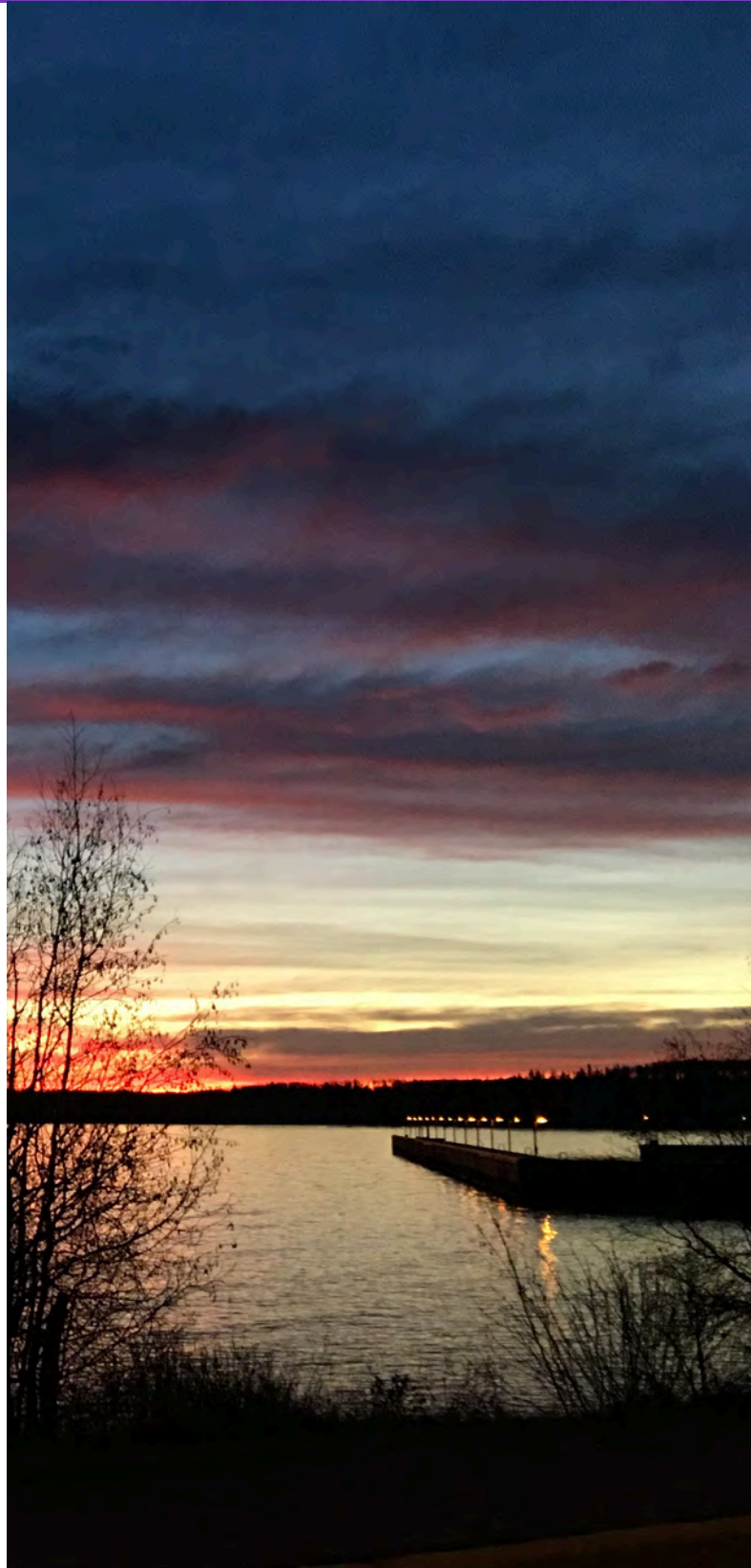
Community support programs offer 1:1 supports to all who struggle with an unhealthy or abusive relationship or have left one.

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

Public Education, bringing community awareness and education about Family Violence to the Lakeland area.

Healthy Babies, we assist at-risk pregnant women throughout their pregnancies and for up to one year after delivery.

Community Kitchen, provides access to meals, fosters social support, teaches cooking skills, and encourages resource-sharing.

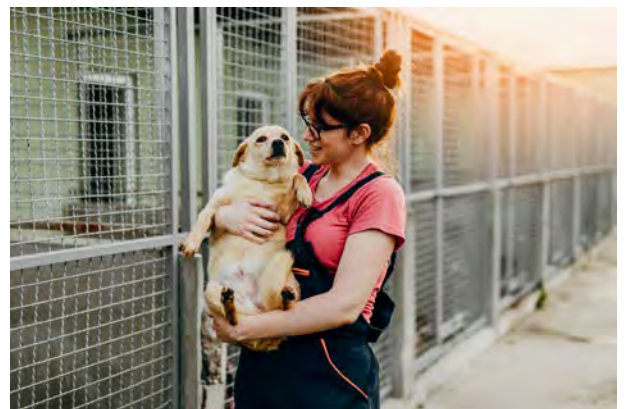


EMERGENCY SHELTER

The Emergency Shelter is a seven-bedroom, 27 bed shelter **for women with or without children who are fleeing domestic violence** or who are in crisis. It is a secure building with 24-hour staffing. Our frontline workers offer safety planning, support, advocacy, information, referrals, childcare, and a variety of other supports based on the needs and goals of our clients.

While at the shelter we provide:

- Safe, secure accommodations for women and their children
- Hot meals and snacks
- Staff specializing in crisis intervention and safety planning
- Child Support
- Private and recreational spaces
- Laundry Facilities
- Emergency clothing and personal items
- Resources and support groups
- Spiritual and multifaith healing room
- **Pet housing is available at our Shelter to family pets (cats and dogs) that accompany women fleeing domestic violence**



FOR QUESTIONS ON SHELTER SERVICES, PLEASE CONTACT OUR 24/7 HELPLINE AT

+1 (780) 594-3353

24/7 HELPLINE

SUPPORTING CRISES AROUND THE CLOCK

Our 24/7 helpline continues to be a cornerstone of our commitment to supporting individuals affected by domestic violence. **This year, our helpline received 1,592 calls**, each representing a critical lifeline for those in need of immediate assistance and guidance.

Our dedicated team provides **expert support around the clock**, ensuring callers are supported and connected to the appropriate resources, whether it be emergency shelters, legal aid, counseling, or other vital services within our community. The helpline serves not only as a **direct support channel** but also as a crucial touchpoint for directing individuals to the comprehensive network of services we offer.

We are proud of the impactful work our helpline accomplishes daily, offering a lifeline to those in urgent need and facilitating their journey towards safety and stability. Our ongoing mission is to ensure that every call is met with the utmost care, professionalism, and a pathway to the necessary support.

As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to enhancing our helpline services, ensuring they remain responsive and effective in addressing the complex needs of those affected by domestic violence.



780-594-3353

Did you know that our confidential Helpline is open to all members of our community, including men?

Through our Helpline, SSCS' CIWs can help with creating a safety plan, provide referrals, and advocacy towards other programs and supports.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

JOIE'S PHOENIX HOUSE

Our Second Stage Program, Joie's Phoenix House (JPH), offers support to clients **fleeing intimate partner violence** in their quest for independent living.

This program provides a safe and supportive environment with wrap-around services that allows the client to focus on healing and reaching their individual and familial goals.

Our Family Support Workers offer safety, support, advocacy, information, referrals, childcare, and a variety of other supports based on the needs and goals of our clients.

Our goal is to **increase the awareness of the impact that family violence** has on families and provide access to all available community resources. We provide information and help families explore themes of "relationships, self-esteem, helpful communication, and positive coping strategies.

Program Criteria

Currently, this program is open to women, with their children, who have been affected by intimate partner violence. Participation in programs and services based on individual needs is required.

SSCS currently offers **7 fully-furnished, two/three bedroom apartment units.**

Applications are welcomed year-round, and are accessed based on priority.

For information, or to apply, call:
780.594.3331 or scan the QR code below!



HELP KICK OFF A SECOND-STAGE STAY!

These items help kick start the next chapter for women and their children as they work towards independent living!

- school supplies (pencils, backpack, crayons, etc)
- household cleaners
- sporting equipment (kids and youth)
- toilet paper
- hygiene items
- journals
- water bottles

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

Our community support team offers outreach services by providing one-on-one sessions, designed to support each individual's self-identified goals.

All sessions are free, confidential, and open to all members of our community, including men.

You do not need to access Shelter or Residential services to access Outreach.

A BETTER WAY MEN'S GROUP & WOMEN'S GROUP

The newly revamped program serves **both men and women who are dealing with issues surrounding domestic violence** such as aggression, kids who witness abuse, the types of abuse and more. This program provides participants with the education, skills, and resources they require to make the necessary changes in their relationships and resolve conflicts peacefully. **Men's group and women's group are held separately.**



EMPOWERING WOMEN

This program focuses on **self and female empowerment** to increase self-esteem and teaches both soft skills and hard skills. Weekly sessions can include physical and mental health, wellness, managing money, healthy relationships, sexual health, and more.



FOR QUESTIONS ON OUR OUTREACH PROGRAMS, OR TO REGISTER FOR A SESSION, PLEASE CONTACT:
outreach@SteppingStonesSociety.ca

PUBLIC EDUCATION



EMPOWERING TEENS

Everyone deserves a healthy relationship, and that starts with early education on **consent, boundaries, and** what a **healthy relationship** should be, and red flags to consider. We offer presentations for younger audiences designed to teach the importance of healthy relationships, and the realities of domestic violence, and how to seek supports in our community.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

We engage with various organizations who want to be informed about the connection between **workplace and domestic violence**. We assist managers in recognizing when a team member may need support and train employees on how to offer help to a colleague or seek assistance for themselves.

CUSTOM PRESENTATIONS

We are able to develop custom presentations about a variety of topics **concerning domestic violence and other forms of abuse** - from service groups to local businesses.



FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT
CONTACT:

priorities@SteppingStonesSociety.ca

HEALTHY BABIES

We provide support for **at-risk women throughout their pregnancies** and for up to one year after delivery. Our support includes one-on-one guidance and education, as well as providing neonatal vitamins, fresh milk coupons, fresh fruit, and vegetable coupons.

Our goal is to support pregnant women to **ensure they and their babies can be healthy during and after pregnancy**. We welcome women from various backgrounds, including those experiencing teen pregnancy, social and geographical isolation, recent arrival to Canada, and those affected by family violence.

All phone calls and registration details are strictly confidential.

Last year, **Healthy Babies program supported 173 mothers in the Lakeland.**

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT
CONTACT:
suzanne.danku@albertahealthservices.ca



"When asked what this program means to me, I was almost left speechless. I am a single mother who didn't have the financial, emotional, or family support that I needed. Becoming a parent is tough and sometimes a soul-ending rush of emotions. There were days I needed emotional support from Healthy Babies, and others when I needed assistance with clothes, milk, and even food. But at the end of the day, I knew Healthy Babies would be there for me. You've helped make motherhood easier and, some days, literally saved my life!"

This year, Healthy Babies program provided 519 fruit and vegetable coupons, and 865 fresh milk coupons.

Items Needed:

- neonatal vitamins
- formula
- baby wipes
- baby bath wash
- baby lotion
- baby diapers
- maxi pads
- breast pads
- diaper cream
- breast nipple cream
- baby clothes

Please call 780-343-0438 to donate.



COMMUNITY KITCHEN

COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Our Community Kitchen program provides access to meals, fosters social support, teaches cooking skills, and encourages resource-sharing.

It is a vital resource **addressing food insecurity by providing meals, fostering social connections, and teaching essential skills**. Through cooking classes, we empower participants with culinary skills using affordable ingredients.

Our budgeting and grocery shopping classes provide financial literacy, empowering participants to make healthier choices within their budget. By promoting collaboration and resource-sharing, we enhance our impact. Ultimately, our program nourishes bodies, fosters connections, and strengthens our community.



These sessions aim to empower participants with the financial literacy needed to make informed decisions when purchasing food, enabling them to stretch their resources further and make healthier choices within their means.

By **addressing the root causes of food insecurity**, such as limited financial resources and lack of nutritional knowledge, we strive to create sustainable solutions that promote long-term food security and well-being within our community.

All phone calls and registration details are strictly confidential.

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT
CONTACT:

foodservices@SteppingStonesSociety.ca

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.** Clients across all our programs receive gift-cards to Orbiting Trends to give back the power of choice to pick out the items they need for themselves, and their family.

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 Cozy Kids program** which provides free winter coats and gear to children in need. **Last year, we gave out 120 free coats to our community.** This program ensures that every child in our community has access to warm clothing during the coldest months of the year.

Orbiting Trends also offers valuable work and volunteer experience programs. We partner with community groups and schools to offer work training.

Orbiting Trends' **volunteer program** saw **972.75 hours** shared with us last year!



To volunteer at Orbiting Trends, please email SocialEnterprises@SteppingStonesSociety.ca



5206 50 Ave, Cold Lake, AB
Monday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, Closed



/ORBITINGTRENDS



@ORBITINGTRENDZ



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.

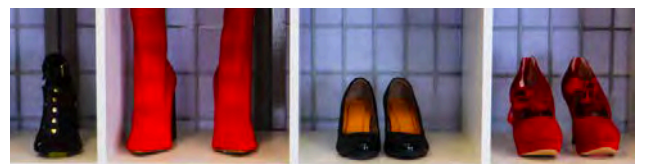
As we enter our third year of operation, we are proud to continue to support our community by providing an avenue for donors to turn their closets into direct cash donations for local charities.

Ella's Closet also hosts seasonal **online auctions** that help generate funds to benefit our programs.

Ready to level up as a community hero through your clothing donations? Sign our consigner agreement during your first drop-off to pick your charity of choice, and we'll handle the rest!



5123 50 Ave, Cold Lake, AB
Monday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, Closed
Open later on Thursdays!



/ELLASCLOSETCOLDLAKE



@ELLASCOLDLAKE



780-594-5777 EXT. 2



FUND DEVELOPMENT

FUND DEVELOPMENT

The need is clear and urgent.

Your support helps to ensure that women and children fleeing violence first have a safe place to sleep – and then can **find a new path forward**, free from family violence. Supporting survivors of violence has many benefits. A conservative estimate placed the economic impact of spousal violence in Canada at \$7.4 billion. Addressing and preventing domestic violence offers cost savings in immediate healthcare, policing, and educational supports. It also provides long-term savings through improved health, education, employment, and wellbeing for whole communities.

Join Stepping Stones Crisis Society in being part of a big picture solution.

How to give?

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



SSCS Donation

Charitable Tax Receipts provided for all eligible donations!

Why give?

- help women and children in your community
- support SSCS' programs and initiatives, including creation of new programs to better support survivors of violence



Stepping Stones runs fundraisers and initiatives throughout the year, from **cash raffles**, to **online auctions**, and especially during our annual November fundraising drive, **Festival of Peace** during Family Violence Prevention Month (November).

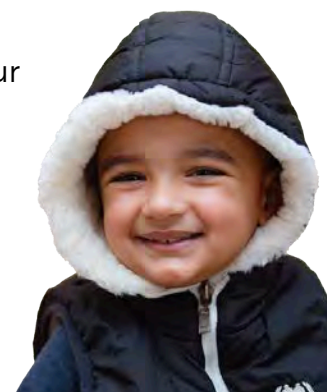
Our events will be shared on our Facebook!

Commonly-Needed Items:

- pajamas, and housecoats (all sizes, including men)
- new undergarments (socks, underwear, bras)
- basic toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream, lotion, deodorant, hairbrushes, razors, etc)

Welcome Baskets are provided on each bed upon intake.

These baskets are filled with items to help jumpstart a Shelter Stay!



FUTURE HOME OF STEPPING STONES CRISIS SOCIETY

Stepping Stones Crisis Society's new building project is underway!

To respond to current and anticipated needs in our community, Stepping Stones Crisis Society is **building a facility that will more than double the number of families we're able to help** each year. Further, it will more effectively help women and children transition to safe and independent living – by providing both emergency shelter and longer-term housing. This new 50,000 sq ft four-story building will expand our capacity to 63 emergency shelter beds, and 12 transitional housing apartments. It will also see a wider, community-facing space designed to support the continuum of care for survivors of violence.

Will you support this project, helping more women and children break free from violence?



We broke-ground in July 2023, and look forward to the successful completion in July 2025.



"My stay at Stepping Stones has given me some independence back, and increased my confidence."

-SSCS Client, 2023

Building *Better Futures*
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

To support Building Better Futures, contact Susan White at 780-201-4937 or cso@SteppingStonesSociety.ca

Photos graciously taken by Burden Photography



STEPPING STONES
Crisis Society



Digital Report



(780) 594-5095



info@steppingstonessociety.ca



steppingstonessociety.ca



Box 419
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Alberta
T9M 1P1

ANNUAL REPORT

STEPPING STONES
CRISIS SOCIETY



20
24



STEPPING STONES
Crisis Society

ANNUAL REPORT

STEPPING STONES
CRISIS SOCIETY



20
24



STEPPING STONES
Crisis Society

THE IMPACT OF THIS PROJECT

The Building Better Futures campaign assists women and children throughout their journeys, including through housing over time, vital wraparound services, and other referrals and supports needed. Bringing all of our services together under one roof extends the continuum of care we can provide for clients and removes transportation barriers.

YOUR IMPACT:

EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS: more than doubling from **27** to **63** emergency shelter beds

Especially as we see violence escalating, we know that having emergency beds saves lives. They help families escape from immediate danger and offer a place to sleep without fear.

This new accessible building will allow us to support those with mobility issues, including seniors. Many struggle with the number of stairs in our existing building.

TRANSITIONAL APARTMENTS: doubling from **6** to **12** apartments

Once women are out of immediate danger, they can begin to heal and develop the skills they need to transition to independent living.

Our new facility will include three fully accessible units, and the ability to adapt apartment size for larger families or single people. These apartments are designed for stays of up to two years.





Building *Better Futures*

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

FUTURE HOME OF STEPPING STONES CRISIS SOCIETY

Stepping Stones Crisis Society is working to address
and prevent family violence –
but we need your help.



To respond to current needs, Stepping Stones Crisis Society is **building a facility that will more than double the number of families we're able to help** each year. Further, it will more effectively help women and children transition to safe and independent living – by providing both emergency shelter and longer-term housing.

Will you support this project, helping more women and children break free from violence?

The Building Better Futures campaign brings all of our services to one accessible location and provides significantly more safe housing:

- **PHASE 1**

A 50,000 sq ft four-story building with 63 emergency shelter beds and 12 transitional housing apartments

- **PHASE 2**

An affordable housing complex, with a goal of 34 units

“My stay at Stepping Stones has given me some independence back, and increased my confidence.”

Building *Better Futures*
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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