

Building *Better Futures*



THE CAMPAIGN FOR
STEPPING STONES
Crisis Society

Did you know that every hour of every day, a woman in Alberta will undergo some form of interpersonal violence from her intimate partner?



“He controlled every part of my life and went as far as banning me from leaving the house while he was at work.”

Photo by Liza Summer. Facing page: Photo by Helena Lopes. Cover: Photo by Tatiana Syrikova. All from Pexels.

Alberta has one of the highest rates of domestic abuse in the country. And in rural areas like ours, the rate of intimate partner violence is nearly double what is reported in cities.

We’re facing a two-year waiting list for daycare. A lack of affordable housing. Fewer high-paying jobs. The isolation of living outside a major centre. They all add to the pressure in our community.

During the pandemic, domestic abuse in the Lakeland region rose an alarming 50%, as women were forced to isolate with their abusers. Yet what’s even more concerning: **instead of returning to pre-pandemic levels, now the violence is escalating further.**

“I very quickly became pregnant in our relationship, which still didn’t stop him from abusing me in all aspects – emotional, verbal, and physical.”



Stepping Stones Crisis Society in Cold Lake is the only women’s shelter within a 100-kilometer radius. In the last year, calls to our 24-hour helpline nearly doubled.

Our shelters served more than 300 women and children – yet **we also had to turn away nearly 332** because we were at maximum capacity in both our emergency and second-stage shelters.

Too many women and children have nowhere to turn.

Alberta data source: preventdomesticviolence.ca/sites/default/files/research-files/Economic%20Impact%20of%20Domestic%20Violence%20in%20Alberta.pdf

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:

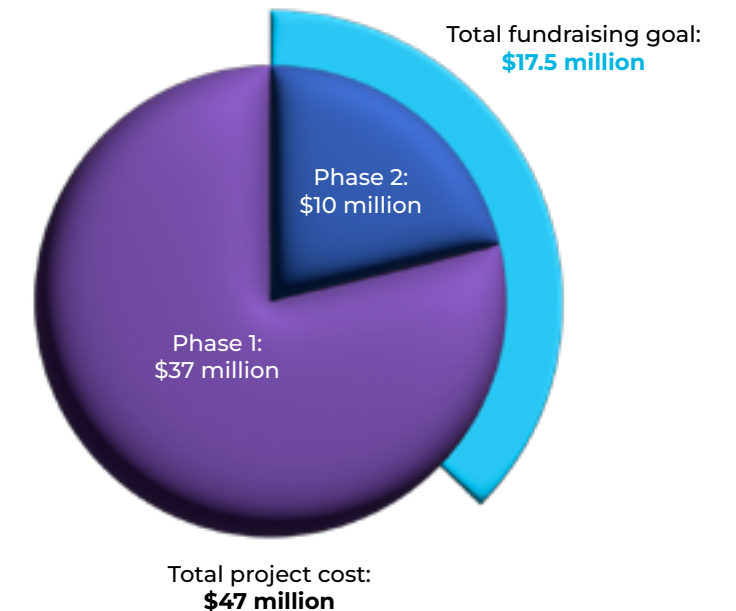
- **PHASE 1**
A 50,000 ft² four-story building with 63 emergency shelter beds and 12 transitional housing apartments
- **PHASE 2**
An affordable housing complex, with a goal of 34 units

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



The City of Cold Lake has affirmed our vision by donating land in a desirable location that will serve families well: it's near schools, healthcare, businesses, and public transit.

We have also received federal and provincial government funding to help move the project forward. But **to make this project a reality, we are seeking to raise \$17.5 million.**



Domestic violence increases poverty, homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, and crime levels, as well as individuals' short- and long-term physical and mental health. The cycle then feeds itself, since “poverty, a low level of education, or poor housing situations can make families more vulnerable to family violence.”*

Your support of this campaign helps women and children break free from domestic violence – building stronger communities and a brighter future for Lakeland families.

“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.”

*<http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/health-social-impacts-family-violence.html>
Photo by Helena Lopes from Pexels.

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.

Photo by Gantas Vaičiulėnas from Pexels.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: a goal of **34** units

Long-term housing supports residents once they complete their transitional housing stay. These units offer places to live that are safe, affordable, and supportive, extending the continuum of care for women and their children.

As women find stable employment but face a high cost of living, acquiring housing that is both affordable and safe is vital. These housing units help to ensure that women never need to decide between homelessness and removal of their children – or returning to an abuser.

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

Unique barriers to affordable housing

As a direct result of the control dynamics related to their abuse, survivors often face specific obstacles to accessing affordable housing. These hurdles make it even more challenging for survivors to find safe housing for themselves and their children.

This is particularly true for those most marginalized and with the least access to resources, including many ethnic or racial minorities, Indigenous people, immigrants, those who are geographically isolated, those living in poverty, and those with disabilities.

Infographic adapted from safehousingpartnerships.org.

Poor Credit & Ruined Rental Histories



Often caused by abusers running up credit card debt or lying about paying rent, utilities, childcare, and other bills. This affects a survivor's ability to pass a landlord's background check.

Lack of Steady Employment



Caused when victims are forced to miss work as a result of violence, or when they are fired as a result of stalking and harassment that occurs at the workplace.

Housing Discrimination



Most commonly occurs when landlords evict victims from housing due to repeated calls to the police, or property damage caused by the abuser.



In one study,* 56% of women with a pet had delayed leaving an abusive relationship because they feared for their pet's safety. This year we have provided **103 PET NIGHTS**

This year our in-house school has provided **140 STUDENT DAYS**

The new net-zero ready facility uses **trauma-informed design principles**, creating safe and calm spaces and promoting openness, light, and comfort. Shared resident spaces will include a **childcare area, community kitchens, and pet housing**.

We will also continue to offer an **in-house school**, an important service that allows children to continue learning – even when they can't return to their school due to distance or for safety reasons.

Spiritual and cultural supports are also an important component of our current and future operations. Space in our new facility allows practices such as smudging and prayer to help individuals' journeys toward hope and healing.

The facility's secure courtyard will have ample **green space** – including a healing garden and a playground – to enhance the quality of life for residents of all ages.

Community Support Spaces will be available to people regardless of whether they are staying in the facility. Private

meeting spaces, training rooms, and a resource library will support programming that builds life skills and supports mental wellness.

For over 40 years, we have been building a continuum of care in Cold Lake and the broader Lakeland Region to help address and prevent domestic abuse. We know that for long-term impact, we must not only help people in their moments of greatest need through the emergency shelter, but also provide supports once they are out of dangerous situations.

We are part of a network of community services and partnerships, including our Cold Lake Interagency Network, Bonnyville Interagency Network, and Elizabeth Metis Settlement Interagency Network.

Your support of this project will save lives and change the future for countless families and communities. Will you help these women find hope and strength again?

"I am so grateful that we had this support during such a difficult time. I received help in every area while staying at Stepping Stones – mentally, emotionally and physically. Staying at Stepping Stones has changed my life."

"Thank you so much. I am stronger, healthier, and emotionally, I feel hopeful."

*pawscanada.ca/at-risk-and-low-income-groups/



EFFECTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE
ACROSS THE LIFESPAN¹

INFANTS	Injury, less control of emotions, problems with parent-child bonding, delays in growth and development
CHILDREN	Anxiety, behavioural problems, failure at school, problems with friendships
TEENAGERS	Attempted suicide, obesity, anti-social behaviour (conduct disorder), alcohol and drug use, other risky behaviours
ADULTS	Post-traumatic stress disorder, diseases and pain, trouble with relationships, lack of stable employment
OLDER ADULTS	Depression and loneliness, shorter life, dependence, financial problems

The need is clear and urgent. In the last year, calls to our 24-hour helpline nearly doubled.

We anticipate providing more than 4,300 safe bed nights this year – a 48% increase over last year. Despite this increase, we simply could not meet the needs: we had to turn away nearly 400 people.

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.

This project makes financial sense, too. A conservative estimate placed the economic impact of spousal violence in Canada at \$7.4 billion.² 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. Your support of this \$17.5 million campaign will help to address and prevent family violence in the Lakeland Region.

It's time to help families escape from violence and begin to heal. Let's give each woman and child the safety they deserve – and **we'll see the effects in our communities for generations.**

Will you give today?

¹canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/health-social-impacts-family-violence.html
²justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/rr12_7.pdf

Left: Photo by Marcus Aurelius. Right: Photo by Monique Pinto. Back cover: Photo by Tatiana Syrikova. All from Pexels.



*“Thank you for showing me love,
for listening, for caring. **You are
one of the reasons that my
daughter and I lead such a
good life now. Thank you.**”*

To invest in
Building Better Futures,
contact Susan White, CEO of
Stepping Stones Crisis Society,
at 780-201-4937 or
ceo@steppingstonessociety.ca.

**Thank you for your
generous support.**



STEPPING STONES
Crisis Society
steppingstonessociety.ca

This campaign's goal is to raise \$17.5 million for Stepping Stones Crisis Society's new shelter, transitional housing, and affordable housing. Campaign costs are anticipated to be 10%.