

Can we talk?

yellow brick house
GRATITUDE REPORT 2015-2016



"This is Yellow Brick House. Welcome to our home. Our doors and hearts are open to you and your children. Can we talk?"

Every Yellow Brick House story begins with a conversation like this. Women share their experiences of violence and their dreams to break free of abuse. Their desire to keep their children safe. Our conversations are intense and difficult. These conversations reveal the distress experienced by women and children. But these are the first steps that lead to a new future filled with hope.

Today, I'm honoured to share with you some of my most important and impactful conversations of the last year. Conversations that moved me, inspired me, made me feel connected to the impact of our work.

And I hope you feel part of these conversations too. After all, your vital support of Yellow Brick House makes conversations like these possible. Thank you for your support, and for helping us provide a new future and healing to the women and children who come to Yellow Brick House.

Lorris Herenda, Executive Director





*We can't do enough.
And we can't do it alone.*

Rehana, Chair, Board of Directors

Every single day I am proud of the passion and commitment of our staff, volunteers and supporters. Together, we serve so many women and kids who need help. Violence and abuse against women and children is a topic that people still really struggle to talk about. I get goosebumps when I think about the fact that our work literally changes lives and a woman's choice to connect with Yellow Brick House can be the difference between life and death.




I see first hand that Yellow Brick House helps women gain confidence and strength. They lead by example, demonstrating to their kids that violence is not tolerated. This breaks the cycle of violence, and her children and their children will live fuller, richer lives as a result.

One in four women in our community experience abuse. That's horrifying to me.

We can't do enough. And we can't do it alone.

I'm so grateful for our caring and kind donors. Every gift really does make a difference. All our donors can be assured that gifts made to Yellow Brick House go to women and children in the most efficient way. Thank you, so very much, for your important support of our cause.



Susan, Survivor *name has been changed to respect confidentiality

My kids made the decision for me. I knew I had to leave. I was seeing myself diminishing to nothing. I was paralyzed. I was in psychological jail. I woke up every morning just wanting it to be night so nothing bad could happen. I saw my kids becoming hollow from the inside. They went from being happy, bubbly kids to being secretive and scared.

I spent my life trying to appease the monster that was my husband.

Things were okay, but over time my husband became more abusive to me, making me feel like I couldn't do anything right, hitting me. When he started to put our children down and disregard them I was desperate. My daughter even thought about ending her life. I was lost, spiraling everyday with little control in helping me and my children!

Then a friend told me about Yellow Brick House.

I had gone from having so much to having to start over all on my own. This is a scary feeling – imagine leaving everything you own and walking away. You feel so alone and ashamed. And then you sit beside other women. And you share. And you cry. And you see that you can get stronger.


Within a week, I was accessing Yellow Brick House's legal clinic. I learned how to take the right steps, one at a time, with help and guidance along the way. I was so scared, but I came to trust the staff at Yellow Brick House. And trust myself too.

I got a job. Cleaning houses. And apparently I'm very good at it! It's the biggest irony because my husband always told me what a terrible house-keeper I was. How my house was always dirty.

One job led to another job and I have started a little company. My own business! I have 4 clients, including my lawyer, and 3 girls who work for me. To be honest, I hate cleaning. But I love it because it's allowing me to move forward and live a life of purpose. **For the first time, I feel in control and it feels great.**

Right now, I'm focused on my kids. I promised them, "my life is dedicated to improving yours and helping you reach your happiness whatever that looks like."

The support I had from Yellow Brick House I will never, ever forget. I don't have enough words to thank you.



You feel so alone and ashamed.
And then you sit beside other
women. And you share. And you
cry. And you see that you can
get stronger.



It feels amazing to think that I'm not just answering a phone or working in the office, I am helping women and children.

Denise, Volunteer

I recently retired and I finally had the time to give back. I've been a supporter of Yellow Brick House for 25 years and I'm happier than ever now that I see for myself what goes on here. I come in at least once a week, sometimes I'll get a call or email asking me to pick something up, and I always do what I can. It feels amazing to think that I'm not just answering a phone or working in the office, I am helping women and children.

I'm blown away by the staff here. They are so friendly, caring and committed to the work of helping women and their kids rebuild their lives. It's a great group of people working on such an important cause.

Bennett, Donor

Well, I'm going to have a lot of birthdays. I'm only 9! So for the last 4 birthdays it's made me feel really good to ask my friends for toys or money for the kids at Yellow Brick House. I feel sad when I know kids here may have nothing because they left all their stuff at home. If my friends and I can help them feel happy and safe, why wouldn't we? I mean, we already have so much and

I want to help!



Yellow Brick House is grateful for the kind, generous support of individuals like Bennett, from ages 9 to 99 and beyond! You move us every day with your generous and kind acts of giving: birthday parties, anniversaries, holidays, memorials and more. **When we need you, you are there. Having donors like you is such a precious gift.**

We are also deeply grateful to donors who choose to remember Yellow Brick House in their Will. Gifts of any size make a tremendous difference.

If you would like to know more, please contact Pamela at 905-709-0900 ext. 2233 for a confidential discussion.

We invite and encourage any and all donors to come and see for yourself how we put your gift into action. We welcome your questions, comments and concerns, and promise you an open-hearted conversation and complete honesty and transparency.

Thank you.



"We are proud to educate girls—and boys—about what it means to be in a healthy relationship"

Nancy, Grey Birch Foundation

What else can we do? What can we do to stop violence from happening to begin with? That's why the

Healthy Relationships Program resonates with us. We are proud to help educate girls—and boys—about what it means to be in a healthy relationship. And how to recognize signs of abuse in their own relationships, or those of their friends.

We have a strong belief that if you want to make change in communities, the best way to do that is to support women and children. Women are the bedrock of our families.

We are also proud of Yellow Brick House's track record. I know that my gift will go where you say it will. You've grown up with our community in the last 38 years. You know what it takes. You've lived up to your word. I feel comfortable, knowing that you'll do the work we trust you to do.

Thank you to all our amazing Foundation partners!

- Shoppers Drug Mart Life Foundation
- Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
- Ontario Realtors Care Foundation
- Longo's Family Charitable Foundation
- Grey Birch Foundation
- The Leonard and Gabryela Osin Foundation
- Greenrock Charitable Trust
- J.P. Bickell Foundation
- The Mariano Elia Foundation
- Edwards Charitable Foundation
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation Inc.
- The W.P. Scott Charitable Foundation
- The McLean Foundation
- Bertram Family Fund
- Honda Canada Foundation
- La Capitale Financial Group Foundation
- RBC Royal Bank of Canada Foundation
- Anonymous Foundation Donor

Yellow Brick House is thankful for all our generous and kind donors, including foundations, corporations, schools, churches and other groups. We are very grateful to have the support of many individuals, couples and families too! Thank you to all our amazing donors!

Your Impact: By The Numbers

Here are some ways your support made a difference at Yellow Brick House. Thank you!

5,581 women and children served

1,592 women accessed our legal support program

2,596 crisis calls

257 women stayed in our shelters

118 children stayed in our shelters

98 women and **141** children could not get a shelter bed when needed

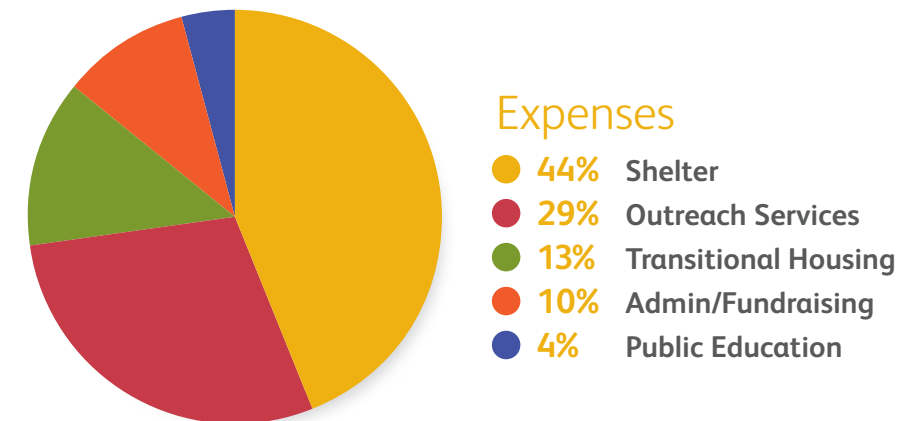
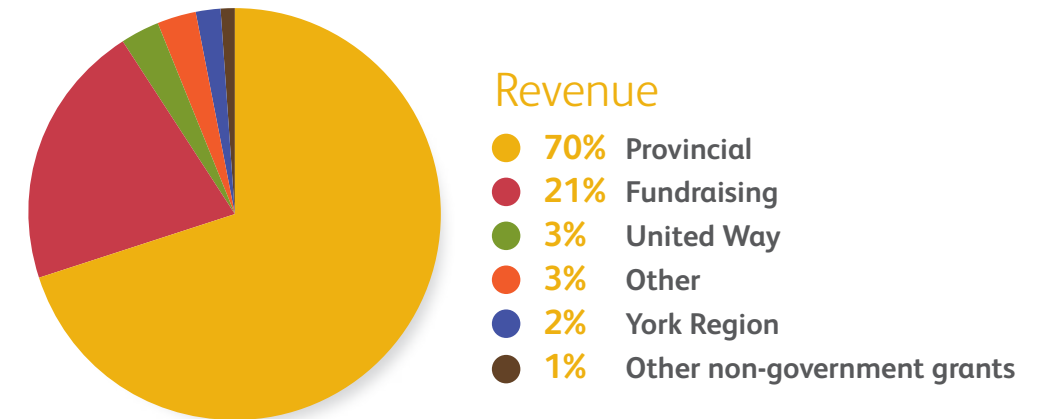
414 women received 'transitional support' including help with housing, budgeting and more after leaving an abusive home

263 kids in our children's program

3,128 students in york region reached through public education program

Our 2015 Finances

Thank you, so very much, for your gifts to Yellow Brick House. Here is a breakdown of our revenue and expenses. We would be happy to share our complete audited financial statements or answer any questions you may have.



Our Board of Directors

Thank you to our volunteers who sit on our Board of Directors! These leaders from our community give their time and talent to Yellow Brick House and we are deeply grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm.

Back Row: Bob Athwal, Stephen Wilton, Lorris Herenda (Executive Director), Julie Cober, Mark Hart, Karl Koehn, Lauren Bonnett
Front Row: Amanda Lee, Ralph Dunham, Maureen Hurley, Rehana Doobay (Board Chair)



Thank you.



Your donation supporting Yellow Brick House makes living violence-free lives a possibility for thousands of women and children in York Region.



52 West Beaver Creek Rd Unit 4 Richmond Hill ON L4B 1L9 yellowbrickhouse.org

24 Hour Crisis Line: 1-800-263-3247 Administration: 905-709-0900

Twitter: @rebuildinglives Facebook: ybhrebuildinglives

Charitable registration number: 11910 5187 RR0001