



yellow brick house

GRATITUDE REPORT 2017-2018



40 years ago you helped a yellow brick house become a home. A home that continues to save lives and support thousands of women and children leaving violence and abuse.

Over the years, with your support, our house has grown.

Today, we celebrate having two emergency shelters, second stage housing for women and children leaving our shelters, an extensive community counselling and supportive services program, and a growing public education program.

Looking back, there are so many memorable and moving stories of women and children whose lives you helped us save and change. We are excited to share a few of these highlights from the last 40 years with you.

As we look to the future, it is with a heavy heart that we recognize that 40 years after first opening our doors, the prevalence of domestic violence has not decreased. One in four women and their children in our community are abused.

Our work is not yet done. Together we will strive forward in intervention and prevention.

Thank you for being a key part in shaping our history and our future.



Lorris Herenda
Executive Director



Rehana Doobay
Chair, Board of Directors

Core Programs and Services

Crisis and Support Line

Our counselors are available 24/7 to take calls from women in crisis to immediately assess the level of danger and take appropriate action. Our crisis and support line is a critical first step for women experiencing abuse, and we ensure that every single call for help is answered. We answer on average 65 calls per week.

Emergency Shelter (2 Locations)

Yellow Brick House has two emergency shelters — offering 41 beds and 10 cribs — to provide women and children who have left abusive and violent situations with a safe and secure home. Women and children living in the shelters receive a variety of individualized services to assist them in making the transition back to the community.

Services for Women

We respond to the unique needs of every woman who need our services. We offer:

- Individual and group counseling sessions to help women heal and rebuild their lives, including our 10-week *When Love Hurts program* to help women understand the patterns of abuse, recognize how it affects them and explore ways to regain self-esteem and confidence
- Parenting support, including our *Mothers in Mind*® program — a mother and child group designed specifically to meet the parenting needs of mothers who have experienced trauma, such as family violence, childhood abuse or sexual assault, and have children under the age of 4.
- Legal information and support in the Newmarket courthouse and in the community
- Transitional housing support
- Community service referrals

Services for Children

Children who experience abuse are greatly impacted in many ways. We work with each child in their own time and space to build trust, help them express their feelings and try to just be a kid again. We offer:

- Individual counseling to help children deal with the negative impact of abuse
- Let's Talk Child Witness Program: 10-week program for children age 4–18 to talk about their experiences in a safe, supportive environment
- Creative play to help children share what is hidden or confusing to express in words

Reta's Place Transitional Housing

Reta's Place is an 8 unit apartment building, where women and children leaving our shelters can access short-term housing (up to 6 months) and continue to access all of our community counselling and supportive services

Outside Our Walls: Public Education

Our Public Education program aims to facilitate discussions in schools and elsewhere in the community about the harmful effects of domestic violence. We reach out to the community in the following ways:

- Schools for Change program: abuse prevention workshops for students from Grade 7–12
- Facilitator Training: This innovative on-line tool — for teaching professionals who would like to facilitate discussion about Healthy Relationships with their students — involves completing online training modules on abuse and healthy relationships. Upon successful completion of modules, access is provided to 10 downloadable lesson plans for ages 13–17.
- Providing education to college or university students and other professional groups
- Workplace Training: Bill 168 workplace *Lunch and Learn* series
- Attending community events and sharing information about Yellow Brick House.



Rose's Story

I started dating my first boyfriend at 19 and fell in love. He had a quiet charisma and gave me everything I wanted and made me feel so loved. On occasion, when he got mad at something, he would hit me. He always apologized and seemed so sincere — I thought that the hitting was just part of being in a relationship.

When we got married a few years later, everything was fine for a while, but soon the abuse started again, lasting for short periods before coming to a halt. I didn't realize it then, but I now know it was a very typical cycle of violence. He would get mad at me about something — it was always my fault — he said I provoked him. The abuse would be quick but intense and then it would stop. He would apologize and buy me presents to show how much he loved me. He said it wouldn't happen again.

The violence towards me escalated after my second son was born, and physical abuse now

included verbal abuse. In time, this started to take a toll on me and broke me down emotionally. I started to believe the things he said. His rage continued and I started to take notice that the children were now being physically abused. My children and I were constantly walking on egg shells, not knowing when and how the next form of abuse would happen.

This forced me to find the courage to do something to save ourselves. I knew that I had no other choice but to quickly go somewhere far away. But where would I go? How would I be able to raise my children with only a part-time job? What if he came looking for me? Who would protect me and my boys? Still, with all these unanswered questions, I decided to leave. I had made up my mind, regardless of the outcome. I took an unknown step forward and left the life of fear and abuse, hoping for a more peaceful one. That day at work, I called a shelter and they had room for me.

I was petrified; I didn't know what a shelter was or what it looked like. I picked up my kids from daycare and we went directly to the shelter. This was the very first time in my life that I was completely on my own with three young boys. They depended on me for everything. I was terrified as I did not know if I would be able to take care of them and myself. However, I was determined to make it on my own since giving up and returning to the life of abuse would have surely put me in the grave.

That first night at the shelter I finally felt safe — it was the first time in 13 years I actually slept through the entire night. It was a new beginning — a turning point.

I stayed at a shelter and received incredible support and counselling. Not only did they support me and my children in recovering from the trauma, but they connected me to local services that helped me rebuild my life.



That was 6 years ago! What once was a dream of hope and peace is now our reality. This is an accomplishment that I am very proud of and I would not be where I am today without the shelter and programs that saved my life

Shelter Resident

We arrived at the shelter like a casualty of war — alone, afraid and displaced. We were welcomed and directed to a large clean room. As we settled in with our few possessions a feeling of peace came over me and the children sensed it too. We were safe; we had a safe haven, a place to think clearly. As the days passed, hope began to permeate in our lives, drowning out the shame to dissipate. With each new day there were new problems. There was so much work to be done to pull myself out of the abyss. For the first time in my life, I was not alone. I had the shelter counsellors to share every obstacle and triumph. They were there to listen to me and help me sort and prioritize, even late into the night when fear would overtake my sleep. Through their loving support and care, I was able to regain a sense of self-worth and empowerment and once again the children were to benefit.

Day by day, I became stronger and with the help received at the shelter I was able to put my life back together one piece at a time.



Now I have safe, affordable housing, my children are protected with the Family Law System, and normalcy has returned to our lives.

For me, the gratitude goes beyond the residency, to the volunteers and the strangers. I am happy and at peace with my life and when I look back to the day I fled and the heaviness of my heart thinking I would likely lose my children, I am in awe. I will never forget how I got here.

This testimonial was written by a former Yellow Brick House shelter resident. Her name is intentionally omitted to protect her privacy and the safety of her family.

Your Impact: By The Numbers

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

5,256 women and children served

4,847 women received services

409 children received services

2,941 crisis and support calls

234 women stayed in our shelters

132 children stayed in our shelters

344 women and **488** children could not get a shelter bed when needed due to lack of space

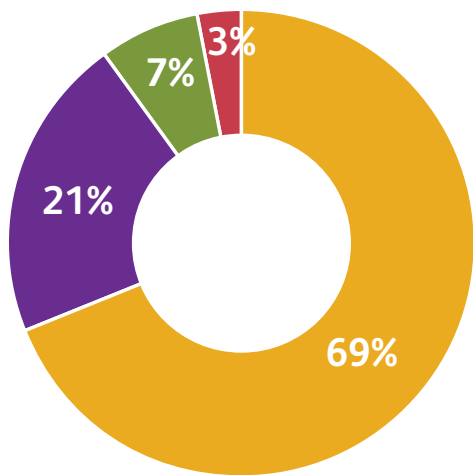
497 women received 'transitional housing support' such as help with housing, budgeting and more after leaving an abusive home

1,384 women received individual counselling and legal court support

4,095 students in York Region reached through our public education program

Gifts In Action – Our Finances

Thank you for entrusting us with your gifts. Here is an overview of where our funding comes from and how it serves our clients. We would be happy to share our audited financial statement and answer any questions you may have.



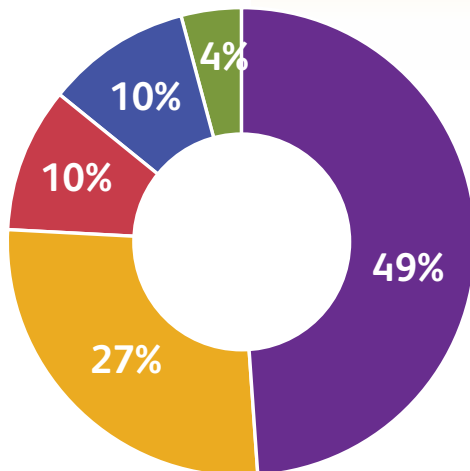
Revenue

- 69% Provincial
- 21% Fundraising
- 7% Other
- 3% United Way of Greater Toronto

Thank You! Our Donors and Partners

When a woman and children in crisis walk through our doors, we are here to help. Thank you, so very much, for your vital support. Your crucial support of our shelters and services mean that women and children walk out our doors with confidence and support.

And when women walk out our doors, they carry Yellow Brick House with them. Your support allows us to provide housing, counselling, legal information and support, and referrals to services available in the community.



Expenses

- 49% Shelters
- 27% Community Counselling & Support Services
- 10% Transitional Housing
- 10% Admin/Fundraising
- 4% Public Education

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.

TOP: (Left to Right) Steve Wilton (Treasurer), John Papas, Laura Weir, Lorris Herenda (Executive Director), Deirdre Broude (Secretary), Bob Athwal

BOTTOM: (Left to Right) Tami Brisland, Dharmesh Morjaria, Rehana Doobay (Chair), Mark Hart (Vice Chair), Lori Thompson

Not Present: Maureen Hurley and Lauren Bonnett

Mission

Yellow Brick House is mandated to provide service in York Region to women and children who have experienced or witnessed violence and abuse.

Vision

Yellow Brick House is committed to challenging and eradicating the beliefs, values, systems and structures which support and perpetuate sexism and violence against women.





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



www.yellowbrickhouse.org

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

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

Twitter: **@rebuildinglives** | Facebook: **ybhrebuildinglives**

Charitable registration number: 11910 5187 RR0001