### GRATITUDE REPORT yellowbrickhouse 2021-2022

Domestic violence increased by 30% during the pandemic. Thank you for keeping Yellow Brick House open and safe for women and children escaping violence.

# **Core Programs & Services**

#### **Two Emergency Shelters**

Women and children escaping abuse and violence have a safe home in our shelters. Yellow Brick House offers 51 beds and cribs.

#### 24/7 Crisis & Support Line

Counsellors are available 24/7 to help individuals in crisis assess their level of danger and take appropriate action.

### Virtual Public Education

- Healthy Homes: abuse prevention workshops for newcomers and immigrants to Canada
- Schools for Change Program: abuse prevention workshops for grades 6-12
- Stepping Up: a peer-facilitated program aimed to support post-graduate students in developing a tool kit to support peers experiencing violence
- Free online facilitator training: to assist youth and adults in having discussions about healthy relationships
- Staff training: Recognizing & Responding to Abuse, Bill 168

#### **Counselling & Support Services**

#### For Women

- Individual counselling
- Group support: When Love Hurts teaches about the cycle of abuse and how to make healthy, safe choices in future relationships
- Parenting support groups: Handle with Care and Mothers in Mind<sup>®</sup> enhance parenting skills
- Family court support: a specialized service that helps individuals dealing with difficult family law and other legal matters
- Transitional and housing support: assists individuals in finding safe, stable housing and resources in the community

For Children (to help them recover from experiencing or witnessing violence)

- Individual counselling
- Group support: 10-week Let's Talk Child Witness to Violence Program: helping mothers and their children who have experienced violence learn strategies to overcome the negative impact of the experience

### In the last year, Yellow Brick House and our community have been in and out of lockdown. With the mandated isolation and restrictions during the global COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a 30% increase in domestic violence with the tragic outcome of femicide numbers increasing exponentially.

Compared to previous years, the number of confirmed Ontario femicides has increased by more than 50%. In addition to the impact of the pandemic, the skyrocketing housing market has made it increasingly challenging for vulnerable individuals and families to live independently, paramount for women and children impacted by violence to have a safe place to turn.

The effects of the last few years have stretched us all incredibly thin. But, as we all continue to traverse this ever-changing new normal, one thing is certain more than ever: we are resilient. We overcome adversity and continually find innovative ways to support the women and children in our community who have been impacted by domestic violence and abuse every day.

At the height of the pandemic, Yellow Brick House launched relief initiatives, such as the Liberty Project, a time-limited housing support program that provides direct assistance for securing and setting up housing for women and their children who have been impacted by violence. This project alone assisted 51 families in finding transitional housing last year.

We are proud to say that during 2021-2022, Yellow Brick House was able to provide life-saving support to over 233 women and children in our shelters. Our shelters have continued to remain open and COVID-19 free, and our 24/7 Crisis and Support Line is available to help all who need it.

In addition to the services provided, Yellow Brick House provides counselling and wellness programs geared to creating stability and wellness in the lives of the women and children we support. Through our programs, we have been able to reduce the isolation of our clients and provide the support they need in order to stop the cycle of abuse. This means fewer trips to the ER from recurring abuse, tools, resources, and supplies they need to move forward in their life, psychological support they desperately need and a sense of hope they have longed for. Furthermore, we are able to provide education to both women and children in transition in order to set them up for success.

Although we have seen a lot of success despite last year's setbacks, we must stand together and remain steadfast in the movement to end violence in our communities.

We ask that you join the movement to end that violence, whether it's by providing a financial donation, spreading the word, volunteering, or attending our signature events.

We are deeply and profoundly grateful for your generous support for all the lives you have already helped us save and the thousands more in the future.

With gratitude,

Lorris Herenda, **Chief Executive Officer** 

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**Stephanie Kremer** President of the Board

## **PROGRESS ON** 2019-2023 Strategic Plan

"I was overwhelmed by the support I received from the moment I called. Hearing the person on the line say, 'You've reached the right place,' a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. Thank you, thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart, on behalf of myself and my family."



#### Service Excellence

- Enriching staff and client access to technology to address complex client issues
- Completing a comprehensive assessment on prioritizing program and services



- Implementing a revenue development plan to generate sustainable revenue
- Enhancing sustainable channels of funding

### **Governance Optimization**

- Increasing Board engagement in advocacy
- Maximizing Board's engagement in creating impact

#### **Community Engagement & Action**

- Building a strong public education presence in schools
- Implementing marketing and communication strategy
- Event engagement
- » Break the Silence Step in My Shoes Virtual Walk with 89 participants
- » Break the Silence Virtual Gala with 1,200 households

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# **Diana's Story**

I came to Yellow Brick House after my partner tried to kill me in front of our son. He was charged with attempted homicide. Due to the severity of my injuries, I was discharged from the hospital with both a wheelchair and a walker. Sadly, the first shelter I was sent to could not support me or my medical needs and deemed me unable to live independently. The hospital initially told the shelter they would provide me with a personal support worker (PSW), but that did not happen.

I then went back to the hospital. I spent two full days sitting in the hallway in my wheelchair before I was readmitted to the hospital following strong advocacy from a York Regional Police detective attached to my incident. Within a few days, the hospital discharged me to the streets. I had nowhere to go, could not care for myself independently, and no shelters would take me. Yellow Brick House was then engaged by Victim Services York Region and York Regional Police. I become a client at Yellow Brick House, and the staff ensured that I got a PSW. The staff provided regular check-ins, emotional support, and ensured that my medical and food sensitivity needs were accommodated. They arranged for physiotherapy and psychological help, significantly improving my

mobility and mental health.

I can now manage grocery shopping on my own, cook my own meals, run short errands, and even have my son occasionally visit me overnight. Yellow Brick House helped me to connect with the Ontario Disability Support Program, apply for housing, receive legal support to obtain custody of my son, and obtain various other resources that I needed to lead my life independently and safely.

Yellow Brick House saved me by saying yes to accommodating me and going above and beyond my expectations. For that, I am forever grateful. They saved my life.

### A woman in Canada is **murdered every two and a half days**







## Awards & Nominations

**Excellence**, Resiliency Category

- ► Canadian Business Review Board Accreditation: "Social Services Organization in Richmond Hill, Ontario"
- ► Canadian Prestige Award: "Parent & Children Support Organization of the Year"

► Nomination: International Peace Award, community member category, "Best Work for Women Empowerment"

► 2021 Aurora Chamber of Commerce Business Congratulations to 28-year Yellow Brick House volunteer **D. Todd Morganstein** for receiving the 2021-22 Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction.

> Congratulations to Yellow Brick House board member and community leader Rehana **Doobay** for receiving the Markham Volunteer Champion Award.

Congratulations to Yellow Brick House board member Dharmesh Morjaria for receiving the 2021 Vaughan Volunteer Award.

## **Board of Directors**

Thank you to our Board of Directors! These leaders from our community give their time and talents to Yellow Brick House. We are deeply grateful for their commitment to ending violence against women and children.

Top row: Stephanie Kremer (President), Carolyn Skinner (Vice President), Dharmesh Morjaria (Treasurer), Zak Bhamani (Secretary), Tami Brisland, Nicole DeKort. Bottom row: Rehana Doobay, Mary Elias, Meeta Gandhi, KC Shendelman, Lorris Herenda (Chief Executive Officer)

# **Thank You!**

When a woman in crisis contacts our crisis and support line, your support ensures that her call is answered. Your contributions help us provide lifesaving emergency shelters, individual counselling, group support, family court support, transitional and housing support, and other supportive services. We also invest in prevention programs to educate youth and our community about dating violence, healthy relationships, and workplace harassment and violence.

Thank you for helping women and children begin their journeys towards lives free from violence!

## Vision

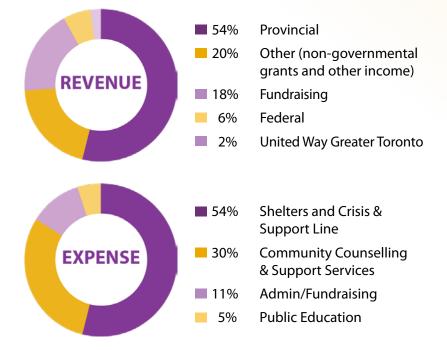
Freedom from violence. Equality for all.

## Mission

Yellow Brick House provides lifesaving services and prevention programs to meet the diverse needs of individuals, families, and communities impacted by violence.

# **Your Gifts in Action**

Thank you for entrusting us with your generous gifts. This is an overview of where our funding is generated and how it serves the women and children of Yellow Brick House. Our audited financial statement is always available to share, and we are more than happy to answer any questions you have.



"You are my lifesavers. Here I felt protected. Thank you for your kindness. Thank you all."

### SAVE THE DATE - SAVE LIVES

BREAK THE SILENCE *Step in My Shoes* Walk: Sunday, November 6, 2022

BREAK THE SILENCE Yellow Brick House Gala: Friday, May 5, 2023

### Your Impact BY THE NUMBERS

5,847 women and children served

**26,331** counselling and court support hours provided to women and children

**2,162** youth reached through public education Programs **233** women and children stayed in the safety of our emergency shelters

> 2,850 volunteer hours

Your donation to Yellow Brick House provides life-saving services and prevention programs to thousands of individuals impacted by violence every year.

yellowbrickhouse.org • Crisis & Support Line: 1-800-263-3247 Office: 905-709-0900 • Charitable Reg: 11910 5187 RR0001 52 West Beaver Creek Rd, Unit 4, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1L9





