

# IMPACT REPORT

yellowbrickhouse  
HOLIDAY 2022



*"All the shelter staff have been so wonderful. I never imagined I could get help or break free from my abuser and be so greatly helped as I have been, at the shelter. I am extremely grateful to all the shelter staff for all they do."*

—DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVOR

Since 1978 Yellow Brick House has provided life-saving services and prevention programs to meet the diverse needs of individuals, families, and communities impacted by violence. In the decades since, more than 141,000 women and children have found their way to the doors of Yellow Brick House on a lifesaving journey that often starts with fear but ends in hope.

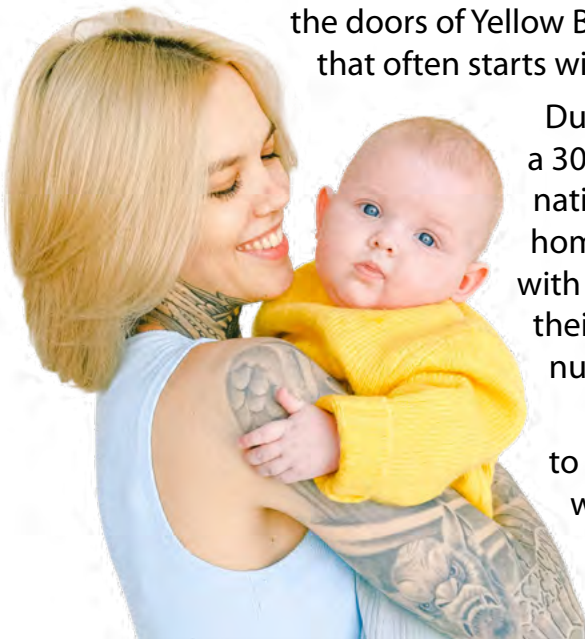
During the pandemic, there has been a 30% increase in domestic violence nationally. In Ontario, domestic homicides have increased by 53%, with 56 women and children losing their lives this year alone. These numbers are heartbreaking.

But there is good news: Thanks to compassionate people like you, women and children are able to

escape violent homes and get the supports that they need to rebuild their lives. Each night without fail, our two emergency shelters are full. This holiday season was no exception.

This holiday season, your generous financial and in-kind donations have changed lives forever – freeing people from physical, financial, emotional, spiritual, and verbal abuse. Following is the story of a woman named Alyson, who shares her story and gratitude.

Thank you for helping women and children begin their journey toward lives free from violence!



Handwritten signature of Lorris Herenda.

Lorris Herenda,  
Chief Executive Officer, Yellow Brick House

# Alyson's story

A few years ago we went through a night filled with my abusive partner's rage and violent threats, because I had "dared" to take our three kids trick-or-treating for Halloween. When we came home from an hour of happiness, he grabbed the kids' treat bags and threw them in the garbage can, screaming at all of us for going out at night without his permission.

I put the children to bed; they were crying and devastated. I did what I could to comfort them, knowing that was little to nothing that would help them with their sadness and fear. I knew that more violence was coming that night and would be directed toward me. His rage and violence were escalating each time.

I had no financial or emotional resources. My family lives far away, and my husband didn't allow me to have money. I was afraid to call the police, because I believed that they would have child protection take the children away. I had heard horror stories about shelters being unsafe, so I thought shelters were not an option, either.

We hunkered down for the month of November. But on December 1st, he started again. He was out of control, swearing and smashing things in the house. This time the neighbours heard what was going on and called police. He had beaten me and was arrested on the spot. The children and I were advised by a police officer to go to a shelter, as he would probably be released from custody in a few days.

All I could think about was being in a shelter for Christmas, and how horrible it would be for the kids. I felt that this was the worst moment of our lives, and I did not want to go. But the officer convinced me to at least call Yellow Brick House and speak to the counsellor. So, I

did that—and I could not believe how kind and comforting the person who answered the phone was. How could a shelter be this supportive after what I had heard?

We agreed to go, but still with so many misgivings on my part. I come from a family where holidays were always a joyful time, full of love and good times. I sincerely doubted we would have that, when we so needed it.

When we arrived, we were immediately greeted and welcomed into the house. Christmas decorations were already up! It was so beautiful! Our room was warm and full of coziness. Even though it was late evening, the counsellor had food for us that was tasty and filling. She asked what we needed, and we were given toiletries, pajamas, and toys for the children. We went to bed, feeling safe for the first time in a long time.

I woke up in the middle of the night, worried about the holidays and our future. The overnight worker, another wonderful soul, eased my fears. In addition to helping me with trauma, she shared that we had wonderful people in the community who cared about us and donated to keep Yellow Brick House in good supply with toys, clothing, food, and everything else that would be needed for the holidays. She was right! All the families at the shelter received so much! I still tear up when I think of the generosity. That support was the best Christmas gift of all.

We stayed at the shelter for three months. My children and I are now housed in a good and safe place. The abuser is out of our lives, and we are moving ahead. It has been two Christmases since we went to the shelter. We still talk about how that horrible incident turned into a wonderful and magical holiday. We have an ornament from the shelter that we continue to hang on our tree; it reminds us of the generosity of others.

**There are so many caring people that we can never thank enough, people who helped us to start our healing journey. We will always be grateful for their concern and kindness.**



# Thank you to our giving community!

Here are a few of our generous 2022 holiday season donors.



Samuel Associate Tube Group



CGI

Respect and corporate social responsibility are core values of CGI, and we are committed to creating a more inclusive and sustainable world by supporting the communities where we live and work. We are inspired by the team at Yellow Brick House. Their efforts to end violence against women and children, and their mission to help rebuild lives, are making a tremendous difference. It seemed only natural for us to regroup as a team before the holidays to support Yellow Brick House. Thank you, Yellow Brick House, for all that you're doing to save lives.

—CGI Inc.



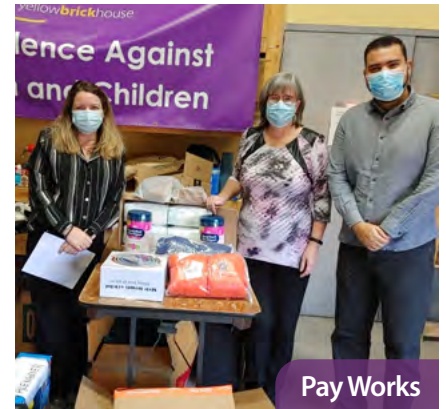
Argo Lumber



Christine Lum-Peters & Sai-Kit Eng



Safeline Management



Pay Works

Wilson Niblett believes Yellow Brick House provides a very important function in our society to help women and children rebuild their lives. When women and children feel that they have nowhere to turn, it is comforting to know that Yellow Brick House team is there to provide them with the services they need.

—Wilson-Niblett Motors



Wilson-Niblett Motors



Kiwanis Club of Riverdale

Donation group photos by Yellow Brick House and donors. Other photos from Pexels: Page 1 – Amy T, Anna Shvets. Page 2 – Pixabay.

Grand total raised  
this holiday season:

**\$202,500**

**\$23,590**

in-kind gift cards given



**118**

third party in-kind donations

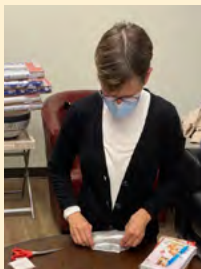


**1,074**

volunteer hours



Special thanks to our gift-wrapping volunteers!



**Your donation to Yellow Brick House helps to provide life-saving services and prevention programs to thousands of individuals impacted by violence each year. Thank you.**

DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS SAY:

*"I want to thank the entire staff for being there for me at this vulnerable time and helping me with all of my needs."*

*"I would like to thank everybody for all the support that me and my daughters got. I know we will have a long journey, but with your help and the support that I got, my first step was less hard to make."*

*"I appreciate the support and the warm welcome I received from the first day I got to the shelter. I never imagined I could get this high level of support and assistance. I am extremely grateful for Yellow Brick House."*

*"The staff at Yellow Brick House are the best. They supported me in all aspects that I needed. I feel fulfilled and happy that they encouraged me for my short- and long-term goals. I came here afraid, but now I am confident and able to see the beauty the future holds for me and my children. I'm grateful to the angels in the form of human beings at Yellow Brick House."*

*"Staff were overwhelmingly supportive. Everyone was kind and offered services I did not know existed! THANK YOU!!"*



Founded in 1978, **Yellow Brick House** provides life-saving services and prevention programs to meet the diverse needs of individuals, families, and communities impacted by violence. Our core services include: two emergency shelters; 24/7 crisis and support line; public education; and community counselling and support services for women and children.



@yellowbrckhouse

