



**GRATITUDE REPORT**  
yellow**brick**house  
2022-2023



*Thank you for saving the lives of women  
and children in your community!*

# Core Programs & Services

## Two Emergency Shelters

Women and children escaping abuse and violence have a safe home in our shelters. Yellow Brick House has two shelter locations: Aurora and Markham.

## 24/7 Crisis & Support Line

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

## 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 that supports college students to develop tool kits to support peers experiencing violence
- Online facilitator training: for teaching professionals who lead discussions about Healthy Relationships with students and youth.

## 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*® enhance parenting skills
- Family court support: a specialized service that helps individuals dealing with family law and other legal matters
- Immigration consultant: provides women who are newcomers to Canada consultation and education on immigration matters.
- Elder adult abuse: education about the types of abuse, and how to recognize signs of elder adult abuse.

- Transitional and housing support: assists individuals in finding stable housing and resources in the community

### For Children

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

### For Men

- *Caring Dads* is a 17-week group intervention program for men who have abused, neglected or exposed their children to domestic violence.



# Yellow Brick House Would Like to Express

Yellow Brick House is grateful for your unwavering support to the women and children we serve. Your dedication has profoundly impacted countless lives in need.

Thanks to your invaluable support, we provided life-saving services to over 5,000 women and children last year alone. Your contributions have offered them a safe haven, where they can rebuild their lives and find hope amidst adversity. Your generosity has made a lasting difference.

Reflecting on our 45 years of service, our beds and cribs are consistently at full capacity every night, highlighting the critical role our shelter plays in providing safety to vulnerable individuals. This somber reality reminds us of the immense need in our community.

During the pandemic, domestic violence incidents increased by 30% nationally, while our shelter bed capacity decreased by 36% due to safety measures. In response, we secured capital funding in August 2022 to expand our Markham shelter, increasing our capacity to accommodate more individuals and families seeking refuge.

Currently, only 25 out of our 41 beds and 10 cribs are funded by the provincial government. We heavily rely on the generosity of our community to keep our shelter beds open and provide safety to those in dire situations. Your support ensures our doors remain open to offer refuge and support.

The statistics on domestic violence are staggering. Prior to the pandemic, a woman was killed every 6 days in Canada due to domestic violence. Post-pandemic, in Ontario alone, homicides saw a devastating 53% increase. Your support is vital in ensuring the availability of shelter beds and saving lives.

We are grateful for your past support and hope you continue standing with us in providing safety, support, and hope to women and children in need. Together, we can create a world free from fear, where everyone can live safely in their homes.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our cause.

With the deepest gratitude,



  
**Lorris Herenda,**  
Chief Executive Officer



  
**Stephanie Kremer**  
President of the Board

# FINAL REPORT - 2019-2023 Strategic Plan

*“Today, I am living a life free from abuse, and I owe a great deal of that to Yellow Brick House. They believed in me when I struggled to believe in myself. They provided a lifeline, offering unwavering support and guidance that has transformed my life and the lives of my children.”*

*- Survivor*

## Service Excellence

- Enriching staff and client access to technology to address complex client issue.
- Investment in recruiting and training staff; hiring an HR Generalist.
- Completing a comprehensive assessment on prioritizing programs and services.
- Addressing system gaps by increasing our service scope with a housing worker and immigration consultant.



## Sustainable Resources

- Implementing a development plan to generate sustainable revenue.
- Developed and implemented a sustainable funding plan to support core programs.
- Enhancing sustainable channels of funding.
- Launching a new website with 6 new languages (Arabic, Farsi, French, Russian, Spanish and Urdu).



## Governance Optimization

- Increasing Board engagement in meetings with MPs and MPPs to advocate for sustainable funding for core services.
- Maximizing Board's engagement in creating impact.
- Board development day semi-annually for training and sharing information on programs and services.



## Community Engagement & Action

- Building a strong public education presence in schools.
- Partnership with Ontario Trillium Foundation and Seneca College through the Stepping up program to engage post-secondary students in addressing topics of healthy relationships, gender, and media.
- Implementing marketing and communication strategies.
- Break the Silence, Step in my Shoes Walk – November 6th, 2022 at St. Andrew's College.
- National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women – Wrapped in Courage Flag Raising December 6th, 2022.
- International Women's Day – March 8th, 2023.



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# Lena & Emma's Story

Enduring years of an abusive relationship kept me in a cycle of fear and pain. My once beloved partner became my tormentor, making each day a battle for survival. Yet, a flicker of hope urged me to escape this nightmare.

Summoning the courage, I called Yellow Brick House's 24/7 crisis and support line.

To my surprise, the councillor listened without judgment, validating my experiences and assuring me of support. They provided vital information about available resources, including shelter and counselling services, offering hope for a better future.

With my daughter Emma in my arms, I found solace upon entering the shelter. Kindness greeted us, providing nourishment and a safe room for rest after a long and hard journey.

Within the shelter, healing began. We received resources like counselling and therapy, equipping us to navigate our trauma. The staff became our pillars of support, offering a listening ear, encouragement, and practical assistance with legal, immigration, financial, and housing matters.

Eventually, we moved out of the shelter with newfound support and guidance, securing our own apartment and a job that granted stability and independence.

Looking back, I am grateful for Yellow Brick House and its staff. They provided more than shelter; they gave us a healing environment to rebuild our lives. They showed me that my past doesn't define me but rather the strength and resilience within, as I chose a better life for my daughter and myself.

Now, in our new home, I watch Emma play, recognizing the distance we've come from the darkness we once knew. Counselling helped me to find wisdom in my wounds, and while scars remain, they remind me of the battles fought and the strength we possess.

Our story represents countless survivors who have triumphed over abuse. It reminds us that no one should face abuse alone and that support and resources can be lifelines. Holding Emma's hand, I embrace our bright and hopeful future.



*Each year in Canada, an estimated 360,000 children witness or experience family violence.*

# Awards & Nominations

## 2023

- Winner - Richmond Hill Board of Trade – Non-Profit of the Year
- Finalist – Vaughan Chamber of Commerce – Non-Profit Charity
- Nominated – Newmarket Chamber of Commerce – Non-Profit of the Year

## 2022

- Markham Board of Trade, Community Relations & Cultural Enrichment Award
- Attorney General's Victim Services Award – D. Todd Morganstein, volunteer of Yellow Brick House
- Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Ontario Award for Yellow Brick House, CEO, Lorris Herenda
- Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Nova Scotia Award for Yellow Brick House, CEO, Lorris Herenda
- Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Ontario for Yellow Brick House, Board President, Stephanie Kremer

*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.*

## Board of Directors



*Top row: Stephanie Kremer (President), Carolyn Skinner (Vice President), Dharmesh Morjaria (Treasurer), Zak Bhamani (Secretary), KC Shendelman, Mary Elias. Bottom row: Meeta Gandhi, Nicole Dekort, Inna Koldorf, Nancy Pavao, Tami Brisland, 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 life-saving emergency shelters, individual counselling, group support, family court support, transitional and housing support, immigration coordination, and other supportive services. We also invest in prevention programs to educate youth and our community about dating violence and healthy relationships.

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

## Vision

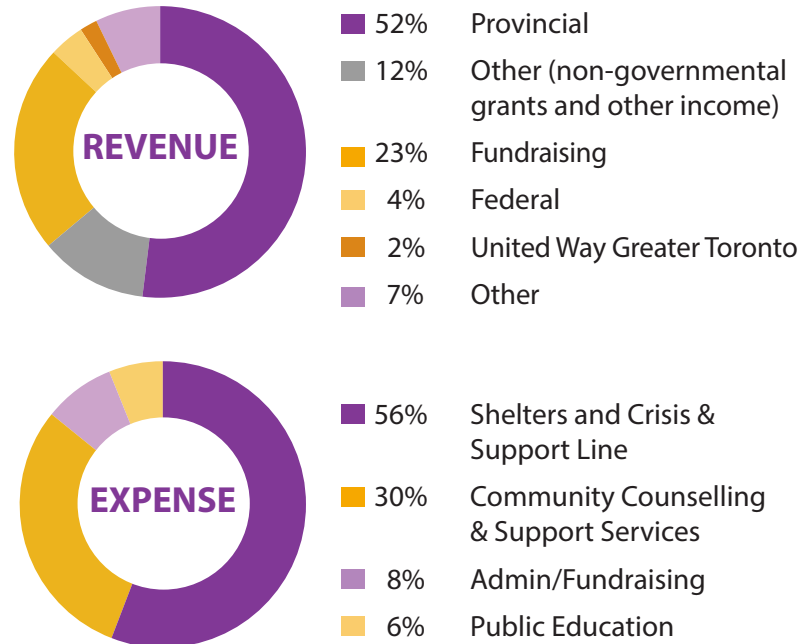
Freedom from violence. Equality for all.

## Mission

Yellow Brick House provides life-saving 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 available to share, and we are more than happy to answer any questions you have.



*“Through therapy sessions, I learned to heal from the trauma and rebuild my self-esteem, allowing me to envision a brighter future. Thank you Yellow Brick House.” - Survivor*

## ***New programs and projects were completed this year!***

With utmost gratitude, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of you for your unwavering support during the fiscal year 2022-2023. Your generous contributions and commitment to our cause have played a pivotal role in transforming the lives of women in crisis and their children, empowering them to embark on journeys free from violence.

Your continued support has allowed us to invest in new programs and projects that support the women and children we serve. Your commitment has made a profound difference in countless lives and set the foundation for a brighter, safer future for future generations.

### **New Programs**

- Caring Dads Program
- Elder Abuse Program
- Immigration Consultant



# New Projects

- Markham Shelter expansion, capital funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Aurora Shelter bathroom and solarium renovation, a capital grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Women and Gender Equality Canada, Capacity building strategic sustainability plan
- Women Shelter Canada, funding for several shelter staffing positions, replacement of aging HVAC equipment and other shelter expenses
- The Citrine Foundation, Mothers in Mind<sup>®</sup> parenting program
- “Canadian Women Foundation” Investment Readiness grant
- J.P. Bickel Foundation, Starbucks Foundation and TREBB supporting nights of safety
- United Way, Reaching Home grant for capital projects, shelter staffing, and support clients transitioning from the shelter to housing free from violence
- Hydro One for MiM
- Telus for digital literacy
- New Horizons for Seniors for Older Abuse Awareness



## MARKHAM SHELTER EXPANSION, CMHC



### **Yellow Brick House is proud to announce and recognize the Government of Canada for supporting the expansion of our Markham Shelter.**

The federal investment of \$1.2 million through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) will provide nights of safety to women and children fleeing family violence and helps families who need it most.

“Our Government is dedicated to helping those in need, which is why we are proud to have invested in the Yellow Brick House project, offering women and children in crisis a refuge where they can feel safe and supported here in Markham. This project will provide them with all the tools and assistance much needed to get back on their feet,” said Paul Chiang, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion

(Diversity and Inclusion) and Member of Parliament for Markham-Unionville.

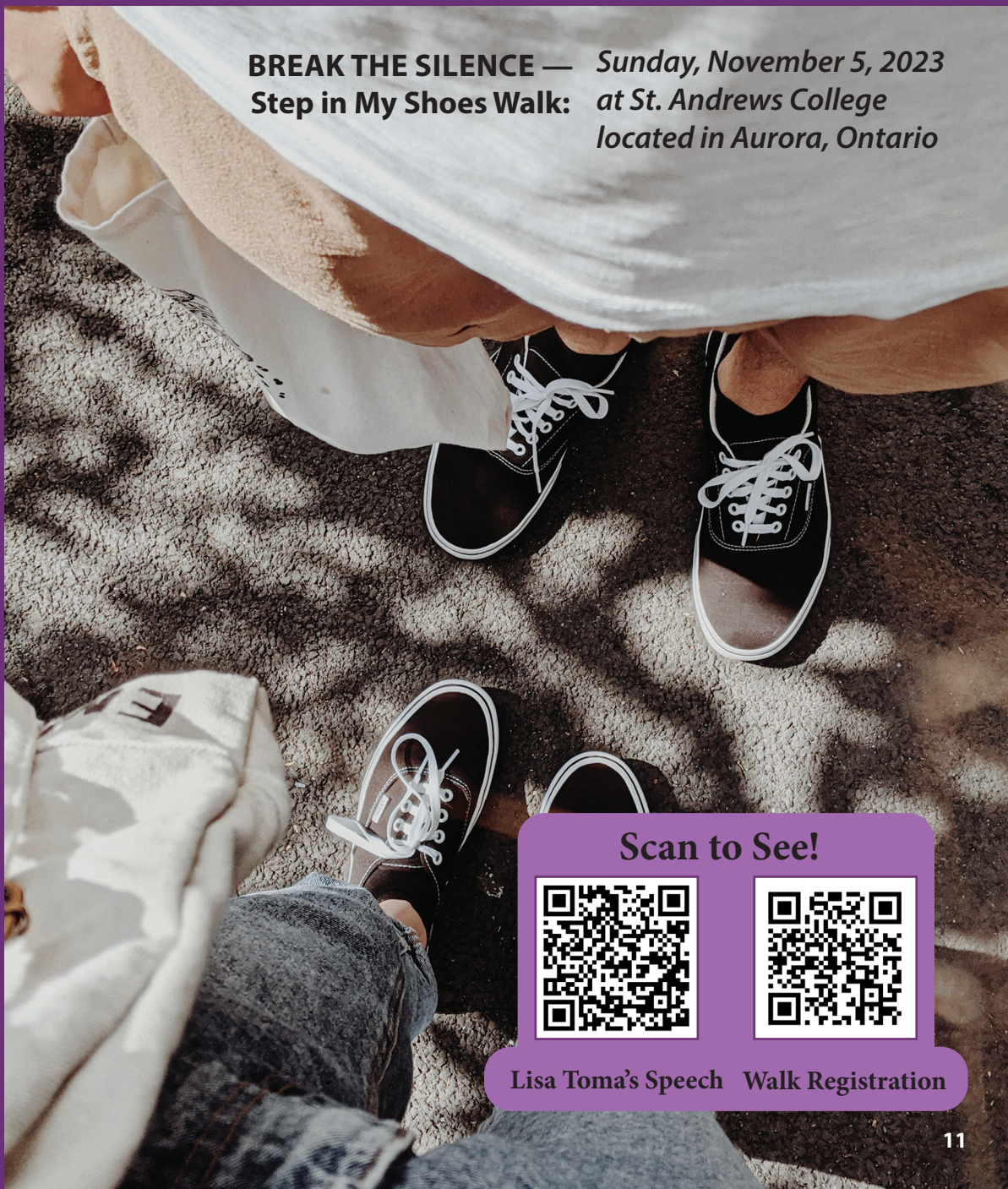
The renovations have offered a significant expansion of the Markham shelter, previously offering 16 beds and 3 cribs. We have been able to add 5 family units with 9 beds and 3 cribs. “This expansion has allowed for more women and their children fleeing violent homes to escape the devastating consequences of violence and have a safe space to rebuild their lives”, said Lorris Herenda, Chief Executive Officer. Additionally, it has allowed our shelter to achieve 25% energy efficiency and provide two new accessible units for families with disability.

Yellow Brick House also recognizes Zahlco Construction, and Kohler Canada for their generous support for this project.

# SAVE THE DATE & JOIN US IN SAVING LIVES



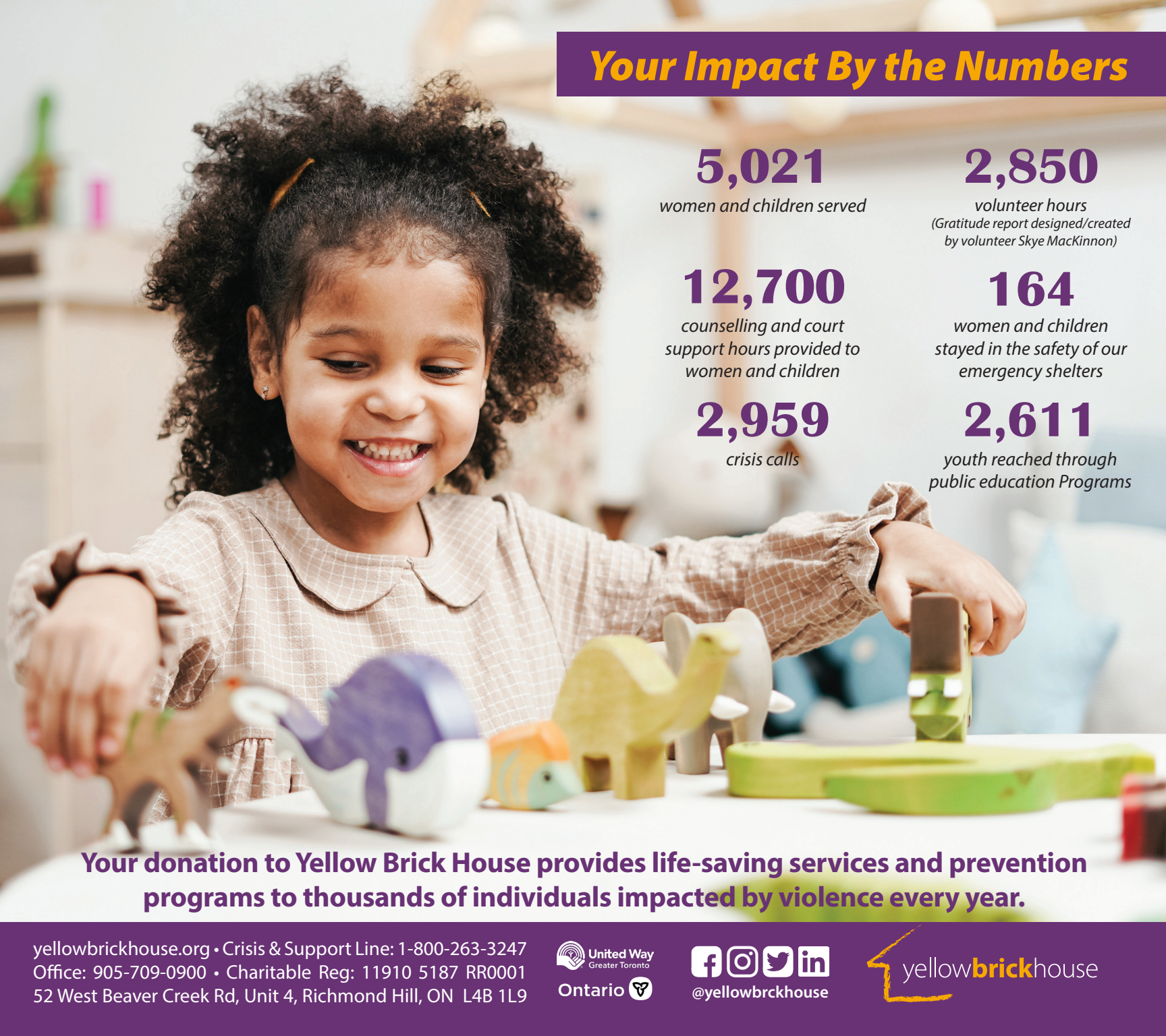
**BREAK THE SILENCE** — *Sunday, November 5, 2023*  
**Step in My Shoes Walk:** *at St. Andrews College*  
*located in Aurora, Ontario*



Scan to See!



Lisa Toma's Speech Walk Registration



# Your Impact By the Numbers

**5,021**

women and children served

**2,850**

volunteer hours  
*(Gratitude report designed/created by volunteer Skye MacKinnon)*

**12,700**

counselling and court support hours provided to women and children

**164**

women and children stayed in the safety of our emergency shelters

**2,959**

crisis calls

**2,611**

youth reached through public education Programs

**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

