



# Gratitude Report

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April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

# A Letter from Our CEO & Board President

Yellow Brick House is grateful for your unwavering commitment to our cause.

As we reflect on the impact of our Yellow Brick House community, we're deeply grateful for the passion and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and donors. Together, we are united in our mission to end intimate partner, domestic, and gender-based violence.

**In 2024, 62 women and children in Ontario lost their lives to gender-based violence.** These were not just numbers—they were mothers, daughters, sisters, and children—lives full of promise, cut short. The need for safe spaces and life-saving support has never been more urgent.

When a woman experiences violence at home, she's often the one forced to leave—putting her and her children at even greater risk. The first six months after leaving an abusive relationship are the most dangerous. This is why access to emergency shelter and wraparound supports isn't just important—it's life-saving. A bed can mean the difference between safety and danger—between life and death.

But the ongoing housing crisis is making our work even harder. With affordable housing increasingly out of reach, women and children are staying longer in shelters. This strains already limited resources. At Yellow Brick House, we operate 41 beds and 10 cribs—yet only 25 of those beds receive provincial funding. The rest? They stay open because of you.

Your generosity ensures that every woman and child who knocks on our door finds not only a bed, but also find hope, healing, and the strength to rebuild.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to breaking the cycle of violence, promoting systemic change, and walking beside survivors as they build safer, thriving futures.

Thank you for standing with us.

With deepest gratitude,



A blue ink signature of Lorris Herenda.

Lorris Herenda  
Chief Executive Officer



A blue ink signature of Meeta Gandhi.

Meeta Gandhi  
Board President



# Your Impact at a Glance

(April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025)



## Two Emergency Shelters

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

**67 Women Sheltered**  
**89 Children Sheltered**



## 24/7 Crisis & Support Line

Trained staff provide immediate safety planning, emotional support, and referrals to vital services.

**1,938 Crisis Calls Received**



## Public Education

Empowering communities across York Region through education, awareness, and early intervention programs — including Healthy Homes, Schools for Change, Online Facilitator Training, Workplace Staff Training, and Elder Abuse Awareness — delivered in schools, community agencies, and workplaces.

**Delivered to 2,725 Participants**



## Counselling & Support Services for Women

Confidential, community-based support for women healing from abuse and domestic violence.

**Counselling and Legal Services: 818 Individuals**  
**Transitional Support: 455 Individuals**  
**Immigration Support: 89 Individuals**  
**Mental Health Support: 99 Individuals**



## Counselling & Support Services for Children

Individual and group counselling and early intervention supports for children who have witnessed or experienced abuse—helping them process trauma, build emotional resilience, and recover from impacts of abuse and violence.

**Delivered to 300 Children**

## Our Vision

Freedom from violence. Equality for all.

## Our Mission

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



“ When I first arrived in this country, I felt lost and uncertain because of everything I had been through. But things got much worse once I was here—my husband’s abuse escalated, and both my child and I were really struggling mentally. It was a lot to carry, and **my child was deeply affected by the trauma of what was happening between me and her dad.** I felt scared, alone, and didn’t know where to turn for help.

Someone told me about Yellow Brick House’s crisis and support line, and reaching out was the first step toward safety. From that moment, they stood by me with kindness and understanding. They gave me shelter and the support I needed to begin healing. **The mental health counselling made a real difference,** I started to feel more like myself and found the strength to take charge and create a new life for my child and me. Slowly, both my child and I began to find peace and hope again—the stability we needed to move forward.

The support we received changed our lives forever. I can’t imagine where we’d be—or if we’d even be alive—if I had stayed. But now, years later, I look at myself and my daughter thriving, and I can only be grateful for Yellow Brick House. ”

- *Salma, Survivor*

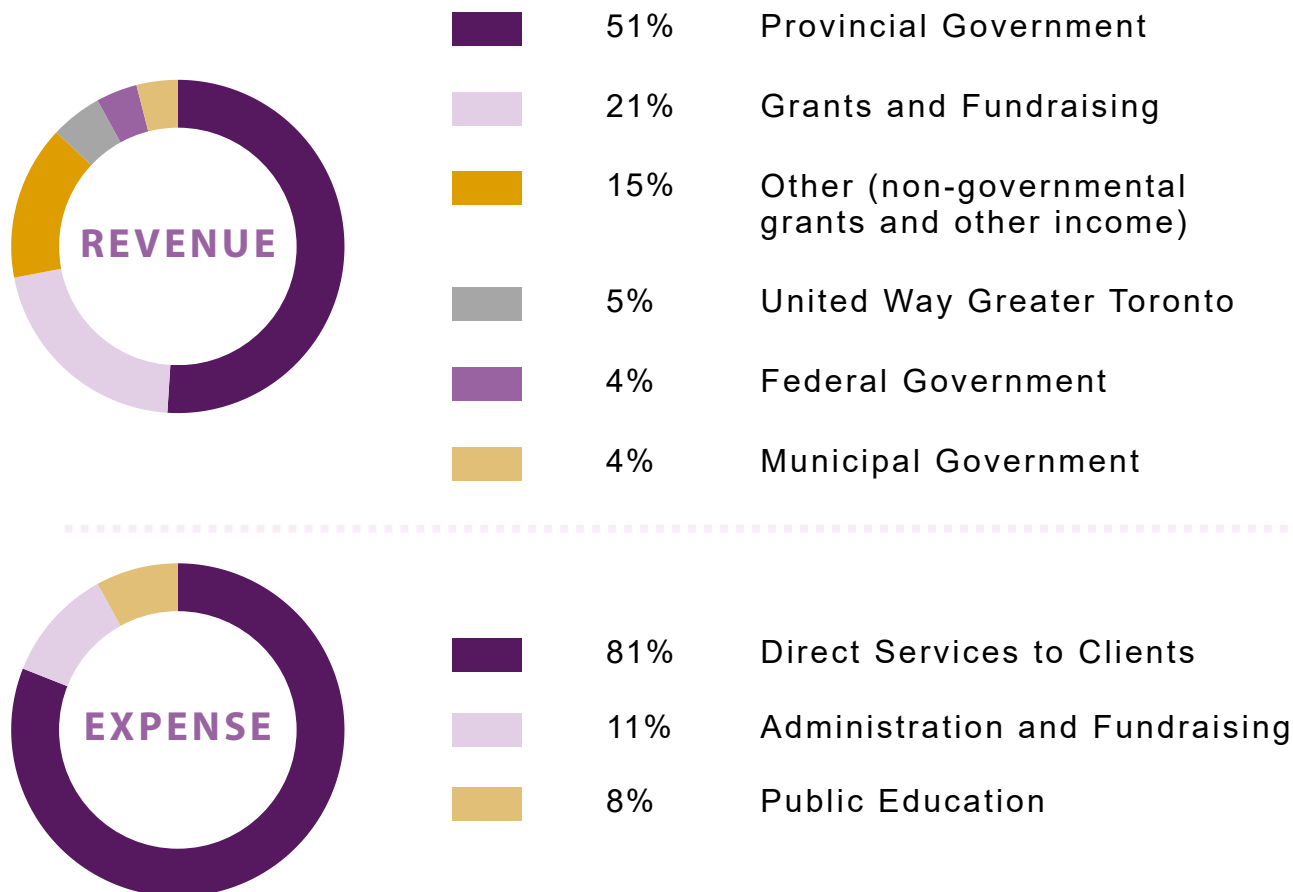
Your donation to Yellow Brick House helps provide life-saving services and prevention programs to thousands of women impacted by domestic violence—women with stories like Salma’s who are rebuilding their lives.



## 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.

Please contact us for our audited financial statement.



“Leaving my home with a baby under one year old, while struggling with postpartum, was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done. At Yellow Brick House, the counselling made all the difference. It helped me work through the fear and trauma, and gave me the strength to keep going—for myself and for my son. I finally felt heard, supported, and safe enough to start healing.”

- Tsehay, Survivor



## Event and Campaign Highlights

### Celebration of Resilience 2024

Our community of supporters came together at the 2024 May Celebration of Resilience fundraising reception and raised **\$200,737** in support of our Nights of Safety program. The evening welcomed 265 guests and featured 12 restaurant stations, all contributing to an impactful night.



### Break The Silence, Step in My Shoes Walk

At our annual Break the Silence Walk, 271 supporters came together at St. Andrew's College in Aurora to take a stand against domestic violence, raising **\$77,791** in support of our services.



### #EmpowerHER 2025

In March, 10 local salons joined our #EmpowerHER campaign, raising **\$21,391** to support our programs. This was made possible through our partnership with Wella Canada, OPHA, and a \$10,000 match from The Citrine Foundation of Canada. 120 beauty professionals were also trained to recognize signs of domestic violence.



### Holiday Campaign

During the holiday season, we raised **\$353,163** in support of our Nights of Safety program and received 1,278 in-kind donations from our generous community.

Thanks to Grey Birch Foundation, every dollar went even further, with \$25,000 in matched donations doubling the impact.





# 2023-2026 Strategic Highlights

Thanks to your support, Yellow Brick House made significant progress this year in advancing our strategic priorities to better serve women and children impacted by domestic violence.



## Sustainable Growth to Meet Community Needs

We completed an internal needs assessment and developed a resource plan to align staffing, infrastructure, and funding with service demands. A new sustainable funding model was initiated to ensure long-term stability and capacity to meet growing community needs.



## Leadership, Team, and Operational Excellence

Conducted an organizational culture assessment to inform future initiatives. Developed new Human Resources engagement and retention strategies to foster a stronger, more resilient team aligned with our mission and values.



## Optimizing Program and Service Outcomes and Impacts

We created a Program and Service Priority Framework to guide future program development and service enhancements. Strategic partnerships were explored to expand access and improve service delivery for our clients.



## Expanding and Enhancing Community Engagement

We launched a new corporate engagement strategy and strengthened our relationships with local municipalities. Board members also played an active role in fostering stakeholder connections and increasing awareness across the community.

# Corporate Volunteer Sponsorship

As part of Yellow Brick House's ongoing efforts to foster a safer and more supportive community, we propose a series of corporate initiatives designed to achieve multiple objectives: team-building through volunteerism, raising awareness about the impact of domestic violence on our community, and engaging corporate groups for sustained financial support.



## What Your Team Can Expect:



**Employee Satisfaction and Retention**



**Brand Visibility and Reputation**



**Community Impact which Aligns with Corporate Social Responsibility**



**Financial Sustainability for Yellow Brick House**



For information on Corporate Volunteer Sponsorship, scan the QR code or visit [yellowbrickhouse.org/corporate](https://yellowbrickhouse.org/corporate)



“At The Home Depot, giving back is one of our core values. Through Team Depot, our associate-led volunteer program, we support local communities with hands-on projects like gardening, painting, and beautification.

**We're proud to partner with Yellow Brick House,** helping create safe, welcoming spaces for women and children fleeing violence. Our teams are honored to play a role in their healing journey and support a future free of violence.”

- Dense Incze, Store Manager



# Awards & Nominations

## 2025

### Finalist - **Bhayana Family Foundation Awards**

Yellow Brick House received three nominations, with one team member recognized as an honorable finalist. The nominations highlighted the outstanding contributions of our Business Manager, Shelter Supervisor, and Violence Against Women Counsellor.

## 2024

Finalist - **Vaughan Chamber of Commerce** - Non-Profit Charity

Finalist - **Central York Region Chamber** - Non-Profit Charity

Finalist - **Aurora Chamber of Commerce** - Non-Profit Charity



## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Yellow Brick House has taken key steps to strengthen its commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion by:

Forming a staff-led DEI committee and developing a three-year strategic framework with input from staff and the Board.



*This project has been funded by  
Women and Gender Equality Canada.*



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada

Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation

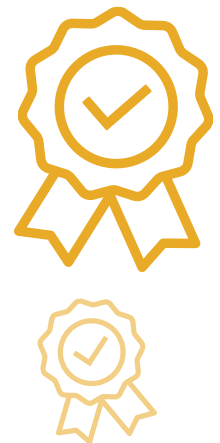


Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

## Accreditation

Yellow Brick House is actively working toward FOCUS Accreditation as part of our ongoing commitment to service excellence and accountability. This rigorous, third-party evaluation process assesses our programs, governance, and operations against best practice standards in the human services sector. Through this journey, we are strengthening internal systems, enhancing client-centered approaches, and ensuring our services continue to meet the highest standards of quality, safety, and impact. Accreditation is not just a milestone—it's a reflection of our dedication to continuous improvement and the well-being of the women and children we serve.





## Board of Directors

Thank you to our Board of Directors. These dedicated community leaders generously contribute their time, expertise, and talents to Yellow Brick House. We are profoundly grateful for their commitment to ending violence against women and children.

### Board of Directors



Meeta Gandhi  
**President**



Randa Ghabril  
**Vice-President**



Dharmesh Morjaria  
**Treasurer**



KC Shendelman  
**Secretary**



Nancy Pavao



Darren Gopeesingh



Franca De Sciscio



Zdenka Pantaleo



Anne Antolini



Joanne Thanos



Julia Vrabec



Neelam Bance



David Masse

“ Life was already challenging for my daughter and me. Leaving home, even though it was unsafe, brought new struggles because of her disability. Finding a place that was both safe and accessible felt impossible — until we found Yellow Brick House.

At the shelter, we stayed in an accessible unit and finally felt safe. With counselling and safety planning, I began to feel more mentally stable and find my strength again, while my daughter received the care and patience she needed to feel secure.

The housing market made it hard to move forward quickly, but Yellow Brick House never gave up. They helped us find a place where we could truly start over and begin rebuilding our lives.

Today, my daughter and I are safe and slowly creating a new future together. I am deeply grateful to Yellow Brick House for helping us move forward without fear. ”

- Lina, Survivor



For information on upcoming Yellow Brick House events, scan the QR code or visit [www.yellowbrickhouse.org/events](http://www.yellowbrickhouse.org/events).

**24/7 Crisis and Support Line (Call or Text)**



**☎ 1-800-263-3247**



yellowbrickhouse.org • Crisis and Support Line (Call or Text): 1-800-263-3247 • Office: 905-709-0900  
Charitable Registration: 11910 5187 RR0001 • 52 West Beaver Creek Road, Unit 4, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1L9