



2026 GRATITUDE REPORT

Together, we create
safer tomorrows.



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April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026

»» A Letter from Our CEO & Chair of The Board

Yellow Brick House is grateful for your unwavering support and commitment to our mission. For many survivors, reaching out for support can be one of the hardest and most courageous steps they take. Because of you, when women and children come through our doors or call our crisis and support line, they are met with empathy, dignity, and support tailored to their individual needs and experiences. Your generosity helps create spaces where survivors can begin to heal, rebuild their lives, and move toward safer, stable futures.

Your support has helped us continue providing shelter beds and life-saving services to women and children fleeing domestic violence. Because of your support, our staff received specialized training in trauma-informed practice, mental health, Indigenous healing approaches, and gender and sexual diversity. This investment strengthened our team's ability to provide compassionate, culturally responsive care, ensuring every survivor who turns to Yellow Brick House receives support that reflects their unique experiences and needs.

This year reminded us that the need for our services continues to grow. While many found safety and hope, others faced delays because demand exceeded our capacity. Your support helps us reach more survivors when they need us most.

As we concluded our 2023–2026 strategic goals and began developing our next set of strategic priorities, your support has helped us strengthen our organization for the future through investments in accessibility, staff development, and community partnerships. These efforts will help ensure we can continue meeting the evolving needs of survivors and our community for years to come.

Every answered call, counselling session, safety plan, and night of shelter stay is made possible because of supporters like you. Thank you for standing with us and helping create safer futures for survivors and their families.

With deepest gratitude,



A blue ink signature of Lorris Herenda.

Lorris Herenda
Chief Executive Officer



A blue ink signature of Meeta Gandhi.

Meeta Gandhi
Chair of the Board

»» Your Impact at a Glance

(April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026)



2,000

Individuals received counselling, community-based supports, and shelter services this year.



11,772

Hours of counselling and supports were delivered reflecting the depth, continuity, and intensity of interactions required to support survivors of abuse and violence.



Two Emergency Shelters

Across 13 family units (41 beds and 10 cribs), our shelters provided a critical lifeline for families fleeing violence.

167 Women and Children Sheltered

Demand for safe shelter continues to exceed available capacity. This year, 126 women and children were referred to shelters outside of our region due to space limitations.



24/7 Crisis & Support Line

Trained staff provided immediate safety planning, emotional support, and referrals to vital services for individuals experiencing abuse and crisis.

1,544 Crisis Calls Answered



Public Education

Through education, awareness, and early intervention initiatives across York Region, Yellow Brick House empowered communities with the knowledge and tools to help prevent violence and support healthy relationships.

4,286+ Participants Reached



Counselling & Support Services for Women

1,494 women accessed counselling, family court support, mental health, immigration, and transitional and housing support services through Yellow Brick House this year.

817

individuals
received

Counselling and Family Court Support

458

individuals
received

Transitional and Housing Support

116

individuals
received

Immigration Support

103

individuals
received

Mental Health Support



Counselling & Support Services for Children

Delivered 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.

350

Children supported

“Yellow Brick House staff helped me when I didn't know where to turn, from finding housing and navigating legal issues to accessing essentials like clothing and toiletries. They also supported my job search by helping with resumes and sharing employment opportunities.

At a time when I felt very alone and without support, they helped me feel emotionally and mentally supported as well. I'm truly grateful to have met them during one of the lowest points in my life. ”

- Shivani, Survivor

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.

“From the first session, I felt safe, heard, and never judged. After a long-term abusive relationship, it meant so much to work with people who understood what I had been through and helped me rebuild my confidence and sense of safety.

This support has helped me in several key areas of my mental health, especially anxiety, depression, and decision-making. I've learned to better understand what is happening in my body and mind when I become overwhelmed, and how to manage those moments in healthier ways.

Decision-making was especially difficult for me, even with small choices feeling overwhelming. I was supported in slowing things down, thinking clearly, and building confidence in both everyday and major life decisions, including education and my future direction.

I was also supported through a very difficult period of depression after leaving my home with very limited resources and support. Over time, I was helped to reframe my situation with more compassion and hope, which made it possible to start taking small steps forward again.

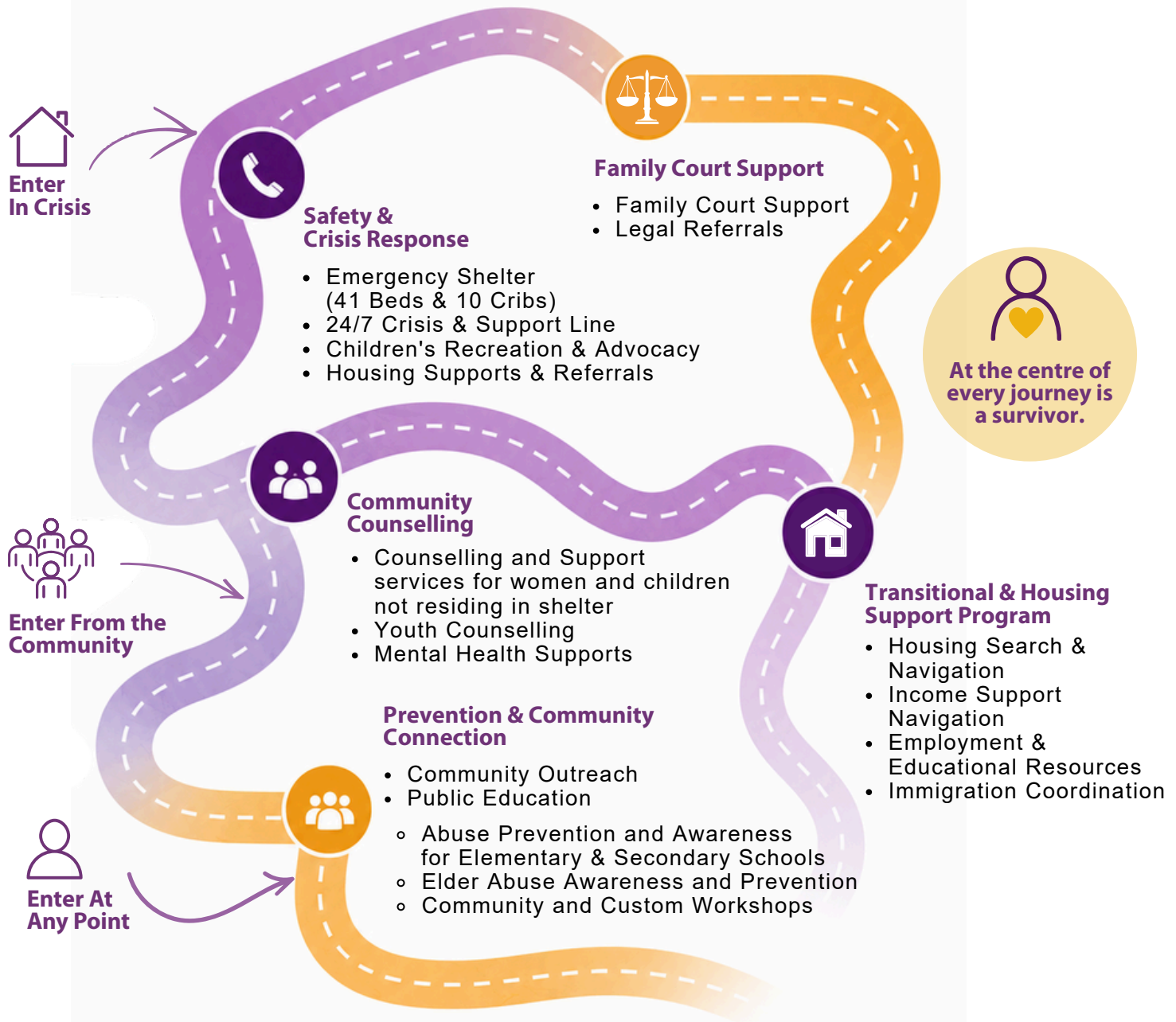
When my thoughts feel unclear or I don't know what to do next, I'm supported in identifying next steps and actually following through on them. Having someone there for me emotionally, while also helping me navigate everyday challenges, made a real difference in my recovery. ”

- Mahin, Survivor



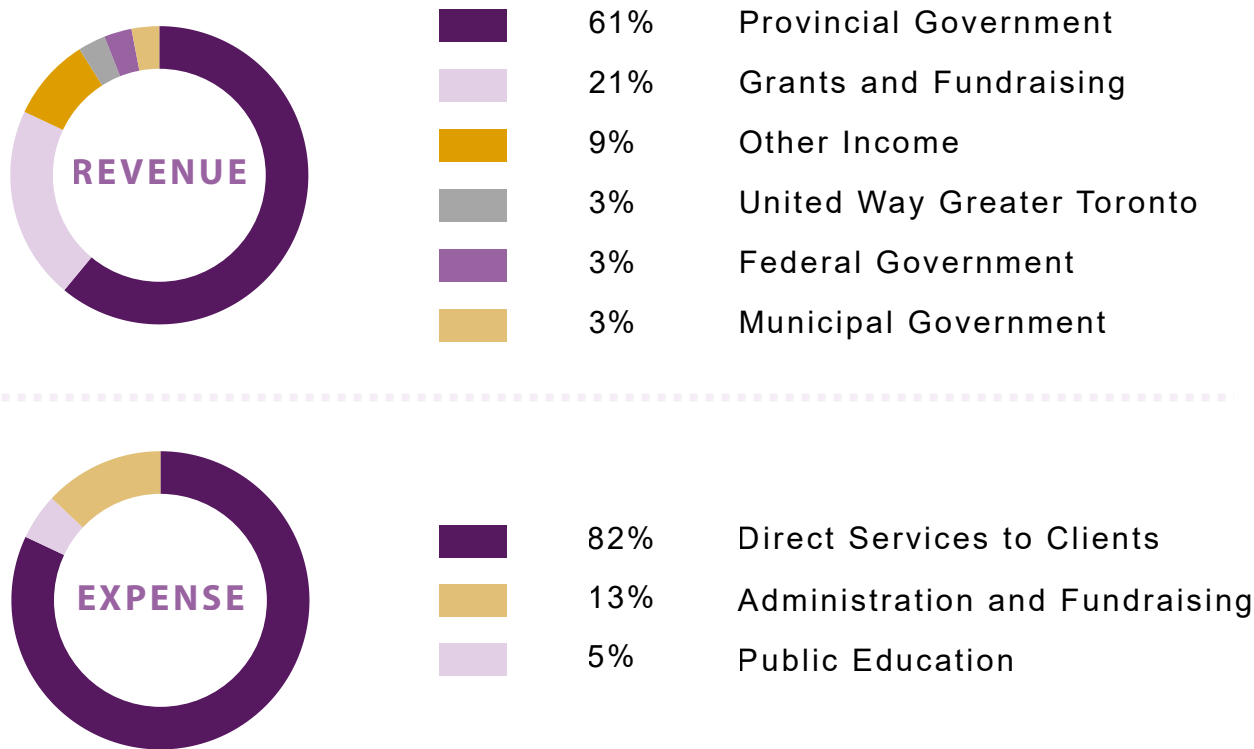
Many Pathways. One Coordinated Response. One Survivor at a Time.

Every survivor's journey is different, and **there is no single path to safety.** Some women and children come to Yellow Brick House in crisis, while others seek support at different stages of their journey. Survivors can enter our services in different ways and move between supports as their needs change.



>>> 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 individuals and families we support. Please contact us for our audited financial statement.



Events & Campaign Highlights



Celebration of Resilience 2025

At the 2025 Celebration of Resilience, **279 guests came together in support of our Nights of Safety program**, helping provide safe shelter beds for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Our shelters provide critical, immediate support for individuals and families impacted violence, offering safety and the first step toward rebuilding their lives. Funding raised during the event directly supported unfunded shelter beds.

Through the generosity of our community, **more than \$200,500 was raised** to support unfunded shelter beds. This support is **equivalent to 668 nights of safe shelter** for a woman and her child, helping ensure immediate access to safety and critical support during times of crisis.



Break The Silence, Step in My Shoes Walk

At the 2025 Break the Silence, Step in My Shoes Walk, **249 supporters came together during Woman Abuse Prevention Month** to raise awareness of domestic violence and stand alongside survivors. Community members, survivors, dignitaries, volunteers, and youth walked side by side, while the raising of the Wrapped in Courage flag served as a powerful symbol of solidarity and collective action.

Through this event, **\$102,655 was raised** in support of our **Nights of Safety program, equivalent to more than 342 nights of safe shelter** for a woman and her child. These funds helped ensure individuals fleeing violence had immediate access to safety and emergency shelter during times of crisis.





Holiday Campaign

The holiday season is a time of giving, and we are deeply grateful to our generous community. Through our holiday campaign, **\$296,993 was raised**, alongside **150 in-kind donations** that were redistributed directly to clients, helping women and children access the resources and support they needed during the holidays.

Together, these contributions strengthened our ability to provide emergency shelter, crisis intervention, counselling, safety planning, and other life-saving services to individuals and families impacted by violence.

We also extend our sincere thanks to the corporate volunteers and third-party fundraisers whose support helped meet urgent needs throughout the holiday season.



Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health Giving Shelter Campaign

Through the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health Giving Shelter campaign, **50 Shoppers Drug Mart stores** chose Yellow Brick House as their charity of choice, raising funds at checkout in support of our Nights of Safety program. This initiative **raised \$96,300**, which directly supported **321 nights of safe shelter** for women and children, ensuring access to life-saving services during times of crisis.

Alongside fundraising efforts, store staff were provided with educational materials on the signs of domestic violence, available supports, and key indicators of abuse, helping to strengthen awareness and response within the community.



»» Thank You to Our 3rd Party Partners



Third-party fundraising partners play a vital role in Yellow Brick House's mission

Through community events, workplace initiatives, and personal campaigns, they not only raise critical funds for women and children impacted by abuse, but also help spread awareness, recognize the signs, and inspire others to break the silence.

Together, they are expanding the reach of support and helping ensure more survivors know they are not alone.



»» 2023-2026 Strategic Highlights



Thanks to the continued generosity of our supporters, Yellow Brick House made meaningful progress in completing our 2023–2026 Strategic Plan.



Sustainable Growth to Meet Community Needs

We strengthened our foundation for long-term sustainability by completing a comprehensive needs assessment to identify service gaps and inform future planning. This work guided analysis of organizational budgets and fundraising goals and supported the implementation of a more sustainable funding model.



Leadership, Team, and Operational Excellence

Significant investments were made to strengthen organizational culture and staff well-being. We updated recruitment and onboarding processes, and invested in agency-wide and individual staff training and professional development.

A Cultural Statement was developed this past year that will guide future initiatives.



Optimizing Program and Service Outcomes and Impacts

Building on earlier planning work, Yellow Brick House prioritized new frontline staff positions to address identified service gaps and enhance client support. By improving coordination and referral processes, survivors were able to connect more quickly with the supports they needed, reducing barriers and wait times along their journey.



Expanding and Enhancing Community Engagement

This year saw continued progress in strengthening Yellow Brick House's role as a community leader and advocate. We advanced a corporate engagement strategy and deepened government relationships through consultations and presentations to MPs, MPPs, and Municipal leaders.

Board members continued to have an active leadership role through governance training and by supporting advocacy and outreach efforts.



Looking Ahead

These pillars anchor the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan and will guide our work to deepen impact and respond to evolving community needs.

Our Purpose

At Yellow Brick House, we strive to ensure survivors have access to our core services when they need them

Strategic Pillars



Meet
evolving
client needs



Organizational
excellence in
everything we do



Maximize the
impact of our
programs and
services



Build stronger
community
connections



Ensure a
sustainable
financial
position

FOUNDATION

Yellow Brick House Vision, Mission, and Values

»» Volunteers

For the 2025–2026 year, **135 volunteers supported Yellow Brick House** across shelters, events, and warehouse activities. Their contributions played a vital role in ensuring safe, well-maintained environments for the individuals and families we support.

Shelters and event volunteers assisted with a wide range of activities, including seasonal shelter cleaning, event preparation and support, and ongoing assistance within our warehouse operations. Collectively, volunteers contributed **1,495 hours of service** over the past year. Yellow Brick House is truly fortunate to be supported by such caring and compassionate individuals.



135
Volunteers

1,495
Hours of Service

»» Corporate Volunteers

As part of Yellow Brick House's ongoing efforts to foster a safer and more supportive community, we have developed a series of corporate volunteer initiatives designed to achieve multiple objectives. These opportunities support team building through meaningful volunteerism, increase awareness of the impact of domestic violence in our community, and engage corporate partners in sustained financial and mission-based support.

One in three women will experience violence in her lifetime. In any workplace, that could mean an employee, colleague, or someone they care about is living with abuse behind closed doors.

By volunteering with Yellow Brick House, corporate teams not only contribute to essential frontline support for women and children seeking safety, but also gain valuable awareness of the signs of abuse and how to respond appropriately in workplace and community settings.

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



“The Women's Section of Bayview Golf and Country Club determined that through our events we would like to give back to the community. Via a survey of our members, it was decided that the charity of choice would support the health of women and children in our local area. Being that we are a relatively small group, it was felt money raised could do more good locally. As such, Yellow Brick House was selected as our charity of choice in 2024 and 2025.

Our fundraising includes member contributions, seasonal raffles, online donations through the Yellow Brick House portal, and sponsorships at our Champagne Open event.

We are pleased and proud to announce that this year we raised \$14,570, all of which will go directly to this cause.”

- *Lea Rana*

»» Awards & Nominations



2026

Lorris Herenda, CEO of Yellow Brick House, received the Dave Barrow's Award, which recognizes outstanding leadership, dedication to the local business community, and meaningful contributions to the social and economic well-being of Richmond Hill. The award was made possible through the nomination by Mayor David West and presented by the Richmond Hill Board of Trade.



2025



**Central York Chamber of Commerce
2025 Business Excellence Award**

Non-Profit Finalist



**Vaughan Chamber of Commerce
2025 Business Excellence Award**

Non-Profit Finalist



Lorris Herenda receiving the Dave Barrow Award from Mayor David West.

»» Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Yellow Brick House has taken meaningful steps to strengthen its commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through the guidance of our staff-led DEI Committee. The committee facilitated a collaborative workshop with staff to define the culture we aspire to create and sustain.



»» Our Culture Statement



Yellow Brick House provides life-saving services and prevention programs to meet the diverse needs of individuals, families, and communities impacted by violence. We believe our workplace culture should reflect this.



We value respect, empathy, and accountability in all we do. As a team, we commit to listen actively, honour individual experiences, and lead by example.



Culture at Yellow Brick House means person-centered, compassionate care, and it looks like support without judgement, strengths-based practice, continuous learning and trust.



This shared culture statement will help guide how we work together, support one another, and deliver compassionate, equitable services to our community.

»» Accreditation



Yellow Brick House continues to move forward on our FOCUS Accreditation journey as part of our commitment to service excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement. This rigorous, third-party process evaluates our programs, governance, and operations against recognized best practice standards in the human services sector.



Over the past year, we have made significant strides toward meeting standards across all 14 applicable domains. This progress has been made possible through the dedication, collaboration, and engagement of staff across the organization. We are deeply grateful for the time, insight, and care that teams have contributed to strengthening our systems and enhancing the quality of our services.



2024

**Began Our
Accreditation
Journey**



2025-2026

**Aligned Policies
and Practices to
Meet
Accreditation
Standards**



2027

**Final
Accreditation
Decision**



Ongoing

**Continuous
Improvement
for Greater
Impact**

Over the next two years, we will continue advancing this work as part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring we remain well-positioned to deliver responsive, high-quality services now and into the future.



For questions or to get involved, please contact:
accreditation@yellowbrickhouse.org

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.



Meeta Gandhi
Chair



Randa Ghabril
Vice-Chair



Darren Gopeesingh
Treasurer



KC Shendelman
Secretary



Nancy Pavao



Dharmesh Morjaria



Franca De Sciscio



Zdenka Pantaleo



Anne Antolini



Joanne Thanos



Julia Vrabec



Neelam Bance



David Masse



David Lee

» Sustainable Support. Lasting Change.



Monthly Giving

Reliable Support. Lasting Impact.

Monthly giving provides the steady support survivors can count on - 365 days a year.



25% More Effective

Monthly donations are 25% more effective in helping save the lives of women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Become a Monthly Donor

Scan or click to give monthly and make a difference all year long.



Legacy Giving

Your Legacy. Their Future.

By choosing Legacy Giving, you become an integral part of our mission to end domestic violence, creating lasting change for generations to come through a gift in your Will.

To Learn More About Legacy Giving:



yellowbrickhouse.org/planned-giving

supporter@yellowbrickhouse.org

Your Sustainable Giving Helps:



Strengthen Programs

Support essential services and initiatives across the organization



Maintain Safe Spaces

Help sustain shelter operations and supportive environments



Respond to Emerging Needs

Allow flexibility to address changing community needs



Build Long-Term Stability

Provide dependable funding that supports planning and growth

Contact US

www.yellowbrickhouse.org

Admin Office: 52 West Beaver Creek Road, Unit 4,
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1L9 - 905-709-0900

supporter@yellowbrickhouse.org



@yellowbrckhouse

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

1-800-263-3247



Empowering Abused Women & Children

Charitable Registration: 11910 5187 RR0001

