



Women's Resources of Kawartha Lakes

Shelter, Services & Referral for Abused Women & their Children



ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Women’s Resources of Kawartha Lakes

Mission

Working with the community to provide services and support for abused women and their children and to provide opportunities to end violence against women.

Vision

Safety, Empowerment and Equality for all Women

Charitable Number: 12981 8613 RR0001

Board of Directors 2023-2024

Chair: *Jane Chapman*

Vice Chair: *Kris Nelson*

Treasurer: *Peggy Taylor*

Secretary: *Jennifer Lee*

Denise Williams, Janette Woolley, Johnine Harris, Sam Itani, Samantha Burke, Sarah Menezes, Shirley Norman

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Programs and Services are possible through the funding from our partners:



Chair's Report 2023-2024

This year has been an exciting one but not without challenges. I was so proud to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremonies of Lori's Place, named after our Executive Director. We are very fortunate to have Women's Resources in our community and to have the community and government support we receive. To add Lori's Place to our services takes Women's Resources to another level that very few Violence Against Women organizations have achieved. Our Executive Director of 29 years has been instrumental in making Women's Resources the service it is today and the driving force behind Lori's Place. She put her heart and soul into Lori's Place. It was rewarding to see everyone's efforts come together and as Board Chair I am so proud that Women's Resources has this amazing facility to offer second stage housing to the women we serve. Thank you to all our sponsors and the staff that made this dream a reality. The Executive Director, Lori Watson plus three Managers, Sharon Benoit, Carolyn Fox and Diana Ingram took on the responsibilities of this project on top of their normal managerial duties. Thank you for all your extra hours of work and your dedication to Women's Resources.



Jane Chapman
Chairperson

As Board Chair for the past five years, I have been honoured to work with such a professional and caring woman, our Executive Director, Lori Watson. She has the dedication and passion for the women we serve and the staff of Women's Resources. Lori is an advocate and champion for all women. As part of the Board's Executive Director succession plan, we have been developing the competencies for this position. It has involved reviewing the current Executive Director's responsibilities, skills and knowledge. One of Lori's greatest assets is her ability to write proposals to acquire grant / foundation funding. I wanted to have an idea of how much Lori has raised over the 29 years as ED. The figure is an outstanding \$3,489,992.99 which is approximately \$120,000 per year. This is funding acquired directly from the ED's grant writing and her knowledge of where to apply for funding which is constantly changing. This will be a very difficult skill to replace. Approximately \$2,000,000 of this was used for staff salaries to provide our wide range of services.

We have developed a new Strategic Plan which will take WR through the next three years. This process reminds us how important it is for Staff and Board to review our Mission Statement and Vision. What stands out to you and what motivates you to volunteer or work at Women's Resources?

One point in the Mission Statement which stands out for me is: working together to support women in order to build a better community.

This year staff voted to unionize which has presented both emotional and financial challenges. I hope that this decision proves to be a success for both staff and management so that Women's Resources can maintain the high level of services we provide for abused women and children.

The volunteers in our organization are an amazing group of women. I want to thank you for your time and your commitment. Thank you to the volunteers and staff of Vicki's Values. Your contribution amazes me every year.

The Board this year has been a very dynamic, talented and energized group of women. Thank you for all the hours you dedicate to Women's Resources. Peggy Taylor and Kris Nelson have been part of the Executive Committee the past four years and will not be returning next term. They have been an integral part of the success of this Board, and I wish to thank you for both for your dedication, time and the support you have given me as Board Chair.



ED Report



*Lori Watson,
Executive Director*

2023-2024 has been a year of significant growth and progress for Women's Resources, marked by the development of Lori's Place our second stage housing program, a new subsidized legal support program, and a partnership with Scotiabank to support the financial independence of women who have experienced abuse.

We have faced financial challenges resulting from the Lori's Place project and additional legal expenses due to collective bargaining as well as unexpected expenses such as repairs to the shelter and a sewage flood. However, Vicky's Values continues to be a beacon of hope as the innovation, creativity and commitment of our staff and volunteers is reflected in record breaking sales. Another team so deserving of recognition this year is our Management Team who have worked tirelessly to get Lori's Place up and running. This project added considerable work to their already overburdened workload. Nevertheless, they met the challenge with dedication and commitment and it is due to the collective hard work of this

team that we have a new program to be proud of. A special thank you to Jackie Chahley, Executive Assistant who also was instrumental in helping to offset my additional workload this past year.

Staffing changes have been a significant focus, with new hires, retirements, and the ongoing negotiation process following the unionization of WR.

To guide our future direction, we have developed a strategic plan for 2024-2027, focusing on four key priority areas:

- 1. Ensuring Sustainable Human and Financial Resources:** This includes developing a leadership succession plan, securing operational funding for the second stage housing project, and exploring additional social enterprise funding streams.
- 2. Optimizing Program and Service Reach and Impact:** This involves conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and service map to identify emerging community demographics and priority service needs.
- 3. Amplifying the Voice of Women's Resources as an Expert and Advocate:** This includes increasing engagement with local municipal government, enhancing recognition of the organization's expertise through published materials and public speaking opportunities, and identifying opportunities to increase advocacy with the Ministry.
- 4. Fostering a Culture of Governance Excellence:** This involves enhancing board recruitment and orientation strategies and developing a succession plan for board leadership roles.

By focusing on these strategic priorities, Women's Resources aims to strengthen its capacity to provide essential services to women and children in need, advocate for their rights, and contribute to ending violence against women in the community. Looking ahead, we are focused on the operations of Lori's Place and achieving full occupancy, finalizing a union contract with employees and beginning the search for a new Executive Director to lead WR when I retire in the spring of 2025. Leading and growing WR over the past 30 years has been the highlight of my professional career. I thank most sincerely the many women over the years who have walked with me on this journey and given their passion, commitment and dedication to ending violence against women. It has been an honour.



*Bella Alderton,
Retired Program Director*



*Alisha Fisher,
Community Services Manager*

Finance Committee Report

Committee Members:

Peggy Taylor (Chair), Johnine Harris, Samantha Burke, Diana Ingram, Finance Director, Lori Watson, ED

The 23/24 fiscal year presented as a very interesting year from a financial perspective, with a blend of victories and losses. We had the additional pressure this year of a capital campaign, which added to our regular fund-raising pressures. We raised over \$400,000 in our capital campaign but our regular fundraising suffered as a result.

We did however, strengthen our asset holding position with the completion of Lori's Second Stage Housing. Through a 25 year forgivable loan with CMHC, we will be able to continue to offer this program to women in need.

Repairs and Maintenance, Office Supplies as well as Purchased Services came in significantly higher than budget as a result of Major building enhancements at the Russell Street location. A significant contributing repair expense was for a new roof, as well as painting and reflooring. However, Ministry capital funds offset the major building enhancements. We also experienced higher than anticipated legal costs as a result of unionization.

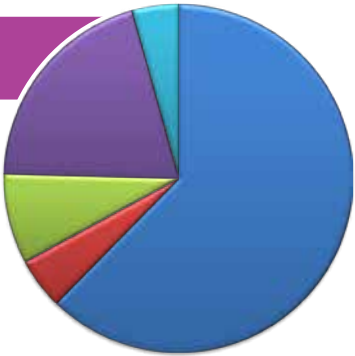
Vicky's Values far exceeded what was anticipated in Revenue generation and continues to be a valued service to both service users and our community.

As we move into 2024 - 2025 we are faced with ongoing financial challenges including staff compensation not covered by the Ministry and legal costs due to unionization and collective

bargaining. This will have a significant impact on our contingency funds. We hope to address our financial pressures through action items identified in our new strategic plan.

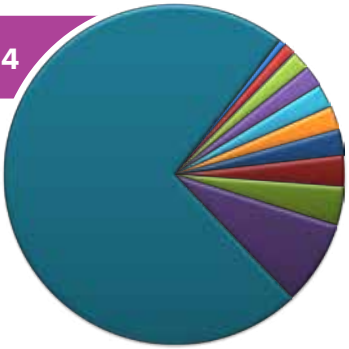
Sources of Revenue 2024

Ministry 63%
Investment 5%
Donations 8%
Fundraising 20%
Grants and Foundations 4%



Expenditures 2024

Advertising 1%
Insurance 1%
Rent 2%
Office & General 2%
Utilities 2%
Professional Development 2%
Supplies 2%
Fundraising Expense 3%
Repairs/Maintenance 4%
Purchased Services 8%
Wages/Benefits 73%



HR Committee Report

Committee Members:

Janette Woolley, Chair, Jennifer Lee, Sam Itani, Sarah Menezes, Kimberly Cook, Lori Watson, ED



Janette Woolley, Chair

The Human Resource Committee continued to review and work from the HR Work plan that was created in the 2020/2021 fiscal year as part of the Organizational Strategic Plan. It will be updated accordingly once the new Strategic Plan is in place. The committee meets virtually once a month, allowing members greater flexibility in managing our time.

Working on updating our policies was a priority until the employees of Women's Resources voted to join a union which substantially changed our direction. Providing support to the Executive Director during this year of transition to a union environment, as well as supporting the work around succession planning for a change in leadership over the coming year is now our focus.

One of the changes related to the new environment meant that Women's Resources was able to fund a new position of HR Manager. We are pleased that there was an internal candidate ready to take on the role and know that Doreen Bekintis will be a wonderful addition to the Management team. We look forward to supporting her in that role.

This will be a year of transition for Women's Resources, but the organization has never been static having successfully weathered many changes in years past. One of Women's Resources strengths that has contributed to many years of successful growth, is that the organization is never afraid of change, embracing the work needed to continue the goal of supporting women and eliminating intimate partner violence.

In her last year of leadership, we are mindful that Lori Watson has been the driving force behind this forward thinking and excellent reputation in our community. Lori has been very successful in creating a team that supports the organization at every level. We look forward to the New Year, with bittersweet feelings for what will change, but also optimistic that, with the help of a very strong team, Women's Resources will enter confidently into this new chapter.

Advocacy and Governance Report

Advocacy Committee Members: *Denise Williams (Chair), Jane Chapman, Kris Nelson, Johnine Harris, Lori Watson (Executive Director)*

Governance Committee Members: *Shirley Norman (Chair), Sam Itani, Sarah Menezes, Lori Watson (Executive Director)*

The Advocacy Committee is comprised of four Board members and the Executive Director (ED). The goal is to raise awareness and promote opportunities for ending violence against women within a local, provincial, national and global framework. The group provides advice to the ED for proposals and requests for government funding and promotes changes to maintain/enhance services for abused women.

The Committee contributes to Board development at regular monthly meetings. This year, we provided education to Board members about Land Acknowledgments, Neurodiversity, and the various ways that abuse can occur.

The Committee's advocacy efforts this year included a request to municipal council to report back on progress of the Kawartha Lakes Safety and Well Being Plan. Unfortunately, no response or action occurred. The Committee submitted written comments relating to the City of Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan. Committee members attended and presented at municipal Council asking that Intimate Partner Violence be declared an epidemic in the City of Kawartha Lakes. The presentation was received and the resolution was adopted unanimously by Kawartha Lakes Council.

The Committee explored the possibility of expanding the availability of period supplies to women in Kawartha Lakes through the various programs available.

Access to legal services is an ongoing issue that the committee involves itself in. We continue to lobby those in the local law community to take an active role in supporting women in need of legal services.

Thank you to the members of the Advocacy Committee. Each of you bring a unique and valuable perspective to our work in advocating for abused women. Your commitment is appreciated and valued.

Denise Williams
Chairperson, Advocacy Committee



This year, the Governance Committee continued as a full committee of the Board. The membership for 2023/24 was composed of Chair, Shirley Norman, committee members Sarah Menezes and Sam Itani, as well as Executive Director Lori Watson.

The main objectives of the Governance Committee are to oversee, review and support compliance of the policies and practices of the organization, according to the organization's current strategic plan. A new strategic plan is being developed this year.

As with every year, the Governance committee reviewed its terms of reference and its annual work plan, to ensure that the committee was in alignment with the policies and procedures of the Board. The committee

follows best governance practices, as well as follows up on action items and completion of other tasks assigned by the Executive Committee. Currently, the Committee is reviewing a draft of the agency's future land acknowledgment policy. This policy will go to the Board for final ratification prior to its continued application by the agency.

This year, the committee had the major task of reviewing the organization's current bylaws, first reviewed by our consultant, then by our lawyer, to ensure compliance with any recent changes required by ONCA. Once our edited bylaws have been reviewed by our lawyer, and the Governance Committee, they will go to the Board for ratification, then will be presented at our AGM.

Shirley Norman
Chair

Fund Development Report

As we closed out our fiscal year end, March 31, 2024, we were also able to close out our Capital Campaign for the new Second Stage Housing facility which has been a fundraising priority since 2022. The Capital Campaign successfully raised more than \$400,000 from the community over the past 2 years and we celebrated with an impressive Open House on May 30 when “Lori’s Place” was christened.

Over and above our Capital Campaign, our fundraising commitment for the year was \$668,200 including Vicky’s Values Unique Boutique and other various sources. Once again, a challenging prospect but our annual fundraisers and Revenue from Vicky’s helped us to exceed our goals.

Our Annual Marquee Event featuring Colin James was held on March 8, 2024 – International Women’s Day – how appropriate! This 12th year was our most financially successful Marquee raising \$27,700 thanks to our generous sponsors and those who attended.

Our ever-popular Annual CASH PLUS RAFFLE! raised over \$21,000. First Prize was \$5,000, Second Prize \$1,000 and Third Prize, a \$500 grocery gift card donated by Food Basics (with thanks!). A shout-out to the many businesses and individuals who sold tickets on our behalf and, of course to those who purchased them.

Other income received throughout the year to make up our fundraising total budget includes Unsolicited Donations, including Memorials, the Christmas fund and Children’s fund totaling \$34,800, and we again thank our generous community for this as well as for the \$48,000 raised through Direct Mail, Third Party Events, Grants & Foundations and Break Open Tickets sold at The Open Grocery on Queen Street.

Vicky’s Values had another successful year with sales and recycling bringing in more than \$532,000 – Amazing! Vicky’s staff and volunteers are constantly thinking of new ways to promote the store – like the regular Bling sales and for the first time, a Men’s Wear Sale – all really popular and successful. THANK YOU to our generous community who donate the quality items that keep our racks and shelves well-stocked.

In closing, we are very fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers that work tirelessly at Vicky’s and help with fundraising and accounting tasks – please know we can’t do it without you. Plus, another shout-out and grateful thanks to our generous community of businesses and individuals – without you, our many programs and services would suffer greatly.

Carolyn Fox
Fund Development Director



Colin James, 12th Marquee Event



*Wendy, Volunteer
selling raffle tickets*

Programs & Services

Women's resources provides safety planning for women. All services are free and confidential.

Residential Services

VICTORIA'S WOMEN'S SHELTER

Victoria's 20 bed shelter provides emergency short-term shelter and support. The crisis support line operates 24 hours a day.

Women sheltered in 2024: 59 | Children: 38

Average Occupancy 84%

Women sheltered since 1992: 2,965 | Children 2,350

Victoria's provides a safe confidential shelter and a supportive environment that allows women to make informed choices about their future. The facility, programs and services give support and care for children, helping to heal the damage caused by experiencing or witnessing violence and abuse.

EDUCATION & RESOURCE LIBRARY

Women's Resources plays a crucial role in raising community awareness to reduce incidents of women abuse through public speaking engagements, media outreach, our agency website, and a comprehensive resource library. Our public speaking engagements cover topics such as gender-based violence, consent, healthy relationships, grounding & mindfulness, general organization information, and more. These efforts aim to inform and empower the community, promoting a safer and more supportive environment for everyone. The resource library, open during office hours, allows free borrowing of materials for two weeks to further support education and awareness.

FAMILY COURT SUPPORT

With funding from the Ministry of the Attorney General, Women's Resources initiated its Family Court Support (FCS) program in 2018. This program is now funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. We also received a grant last year from Women's Shelters Canada to assist our client's in receiving court support. Our dedicated Family Court Support Services worker offers trauma-informed one-on-one support to women, guiding them through the complexities of the court system. This includes accompaniment to court proceedings and assistance in obtaining legal support, ensuring women feel empowered and supported during what can be a challenging process.

Women Served in 2024: 165

Women Served since 2019: 951

LORI'S PLACE

In November 2021, WR purchased a building on Logie Street in Lindsay for the Second Stage Housing program. This program assists women and children who are ready to rebuild their lives after abuse or domestic violence and offers affordable temporary housing up to two years in the interim. Renovations to this building and property commenced late Fall in 2022. Renovations are near completion and occupancy should take place in the fall of 2024.

No statistics to report in 2024 due to closure

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Community Services

COUNSELLING & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Women's Resources offers crisis and support counselling, advocacy, information, and referral services from an anti-oppression perspective to women affected by abuse. We provide individual counselling sessions and support groups addressing the impact of abuse on daily life. Our community supports focus on housing, employment, living skills, parenting, and wellness, empowering women to rebuild their lives with personalized advice. Women (16+) who have experienced abuse or violence have access to multiple service providers at one location. Services include: applying for social assistance and housing; safe shelter; counselling; information on family court; making a police report; parenting support, safety planning, medial consulting and more.

Women served in 2024: 489

Women served since 1993: 18,442



COUNSELLING FOR YOUTH/TEENS

The counselling program for teens exposed to abuse has expanded its scope to include children 10 & 11 yrs. We offer crisis and support counselling tailored for teen girls and boys aged 10-16 who have been exposed to abuse. Our individual sessions focus on addressing the unique challenges youth face, promoting positive self-esteem and healthy relationships. Additionally, we develop and implement a children's program, fostering well-being and support in a feminist framework that prioritizes safety, security, confidentiality, and holistic frameworks.

Teens served in 2024: 127

Teens served since 2007: 611



Programs & Services

Women's resources provides safety planning for women. All services are free and confidential.



CHILD WITNESS

We offer a skill-building group program for children who have witnessed or experienced violence at home, in collaboration with a local children's mental health provider. Research emphasizes the significant psychological, physical, and emotional impacts of witnessing violence, highlighting potential learning difficulties and perpetuation of cycles of violence.

Through role-playing and play-based activities, children learn healthy conflict resolution skills. Our program aims to integrate research-backed strategies to break cycles of violence and empower families toward resilience and healing.

Women served in 2024: 21 | Children: 12

Women served since 2000: 612 | Children: 1,017

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

In 2020, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services funded a comprehensive five-year program for victims of human trafficking. Our program provides trauma-informed counselling, support, advocacy, and referral services in a secure and confidential environment aimed at healing. We offer education and outreach to adults and youth at risk of trafficking, alongside individualized support for survivors, including counselling, life skills development, and job training aimed at breaking the cycle of exploitation. Additionally, our efforts include community-based preventive education and support for youth vulnerable to trafficking, fostering resilience and sustainable recovery.

Women served in 2024: 24 | Youth served in 2024: 8

Women served since 2020: 47 | Youth served since 2020: 399

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the cornerstone of Women's Resources. We rely on their dedication and commitment to support the services we provide.

Volunteers in 2024: 120

Volunteer hours in 2024: 13,343.35

Total volunteer hours since 1992: 293,482.65



VICKY'S VALUES GENTLY USED CLOTHING STORE

The little store that grew...30 years and stronger than ever!

Vicky's Values Thrift Boutique is Women's Resources gently used clothing, house & home and accessories store.

Through generous donations from the community, along with consistent growth through an energetic and dynamic staff and volunteer team, Vicky's Values has become the best thrift experience in the City of Kawartha Lakes and beyond.

We have a great sense of pride in supporting our clients and community members by offering high quality pre-owned items at affordable prices. Our patrons comment on Vicky's being more than just a place to shop, but rather a "shopping experience" – they are on a first name basis with staff and volunteers – they are family. We have visitors from Barrie and Toronto and others make it a point to stop in annually when vacationing in Ontario from other provinces. Our loyal and thoughtful donors will often times gather donations from their friends and families because they believe in our cause and want to support Women's Resources. We are grateful.

While Vicky's considerable revenue supplements programs and services in a big way, it is also a program. Women who are receiving services are eligible for gift certificates to choose items they need free of charge. We carefully select the new/nearly new housewares items that are donated for women starting over after leaving an abusive home.

Recently, we hosted our 30th anniversary celebration with a Christmas in July event that was a record-breaking success. Sales for the day exceeded all previous daily sales in the 30-year history of Vicky's. We welcomed our regular shoppers and new patrons – it was a great day. We look forward to making Christmas in July an annual event and expand the celebration to incorporate a customer appreciation day.

Vicky's Values, 50 Mary Street West, Lindsay.

The best thrift store ever!

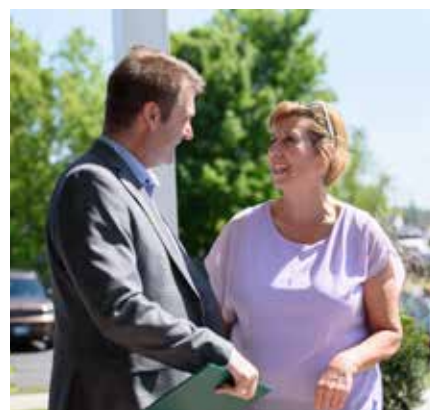


LORI'S PLACE SECOND STAGE HOUSING



Lori's Place Opening Ceremony May 30, 2024

Thanks to CMHC & Trillium Foundation for their support.



*For many women and their children, this home will be the first time
they have felt safe in years.*

For more information see our website:

www.womensresources.ca

Find us on Social Media



Women's Resources Milestones

1983

Women's Resources began when local women recognized the need for community awareness and education around the issue of woman abuse.

1990

Successful in receiving funding for an 18-bed shelter.

1991

Resource Centre opens.

1992

Victoria's 18-bed shelter and 24 hour crisis line for abused women and their children opens, the first in our community.

1993

Amy's Next Step Housing, Community Outreach and Vicky's Values Gently Used Clothing Store opens.

2000

Child Witness Program and Community Support Program begins.

2005

Vicky's Values Gently Used Clothing Store relocates to 50 Mary St. W. in Lindsay.

2007

Women's Resources instrumental in the start up of the Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton Domestic Violence Co-ordinating Committee to provide an integrated service response for abused women.

2014

Women's Resources celebrates 25 years of supporting the community.

2016

Lead agency on the development of Bridges of Kawartha Lakes and active member of the police-led Situation Table.

2019

Women's Resources celebrates 30 years of providing services and support to the community.

2022

Purchase of 30 Logie Street in Lindsay for relocation of Second Stage Housing.

2023

30th Anniversary of Vicky's Values. Open the Door Capital Campaign launched to support the Logie Street Second Stage Housing Project.

2024

Open House Second Stage Housing, Lori's Place, 30 Logie Street, Lindsay

Working Together Supporting Women
Building Community Working Together
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