



Women's Resources of Kawartha Lakes

Shelter, Services & Referral for Abused Women & their Children



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

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 2024-2025

Chair: *Jane Chapman*

Vice Chair: *Jennifer Lee*

Treasurer: *Johnine Harris*

Secretary: *Sarah Menezes*

Denise Williams (2022-2024), Tricia Cresswell, Janette Woolley, Sam Itani (2022-2025), Samantha Burke, Shirley Norman, Ann Farquharson (2024-2025)

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



Chair's Report 2024-2025

As I present this year's Chair's Report, I do so with a profound sense of gratitude and reflection. This marks my final year as Chair after six incredibly meaningful years in the role, and eight years overall as a member of this dedicated Board. Serving Women's Resources has been one of the most impactful and humbling experiences of my life.

Over the past year, we have continued to respond to the growing and evolving needs of the women and children we serve. The demand for safe shelter, crisis support, legal advocacy, and transitional services has only increased, and I am deeply proud of how our staff, volunteers, and leadership have risen to the challenge. I continue to have the upmost respect for the courage, resilience and strength of the women and families that put their trust in us.

This year we have said good bye to our Executive Director of thirty years, Lori Watson. I wish her all the best in a well deserved retirement and the adventures that lie ahead. Lori has been the heart and soul of Women's Resources. Her leadership, dedication to our mission and commitment to support all women has grown Women's Resources to the outstanding organization it is today. I have been honoured to work with Lori and humbled by the knowledge she shared with all of us.

The process to select a new ED was lengthy, beginning in August 2024. It was thorough and transparent with the goal of finding the best woman to lead WR into the future. The board selection committee collaborated with Barnes Management Group to select our very own Penny Chatson as the new ED. Congratulations Penny to a job well done. I am very confident that Penny will lead Women's Resources into the future to grow our services and meet the changing needs of the women and children we serve. I am very proud of our professional selection process and want to thank the board members involved and Barnes Management Group.

Over the past eight years, I have seen this organization grow in scope, strength, and sustainability. I have had the honour of working alongside remarkable people—board members, staff, volunteers, and community partners—who care deeply about our mission and live it every day.

As Chair, I have witnessed moments of profound courage, collaboration, and change. We've navigated challenges, celebrated successes, and above all, remained steadfast in our purpose.

As I step away from the Board, I do so with full confidence in our future. The incoming leadership is strong, the Board is deeply committed, and the strategic direction is clear. I am excited to see where Women's Resources goes next and I will always remain one of its most passionate champions.

To everyone who has walked this path with me—thank you. Thank you for your belief, your support, and your unyielding commitment to making our community safer and more compassionate for those escaping violence.

With gratitude and hope,

Jane Chapman



Jane Chapman
Chairperson



Outgoing ED Report

Lori Watson

With gratitude for this journey, pride in our achievements and excitement for the future of WR, I present this, my final Executive Director's Report. The 2024–2025 year has been one of challenges, growth, achievement, and transition. Throughout my 30 years as ED, I reflect with immense respect on all we have accomplished together.

This year marked the full launch of **Lori's Place**, our second-stage housing program, which reached full occupancy and hosted a successful community open house. We also implemented our **2024–2027 Strategic Plan**, focusing on sustainability, advocacy, service impact, and governance excellence.

Our shelter remained at or near full capacity, while community support programs served hundreds of women with high attendance rates. The **Anti-Human Trafficking program** continued to meet critical needs, with future funding discussions underway.

Key staffing changes included the hiring of new managers in Residential Services, Community Services, and HR. Union negotiations progressed steadily, supported by our legal team and the Board. While it was disheartening to have the staff vote in favour of a union last year, we are optimistic that a collective agreement will be achieved and the vulnerable women we serve will not be impacted. A special thank you to our management team who demonstrated integrity, resilience, flexibility, and leadership throughout the bargaining process, while also maintaining day-to-day operations and staff support.

Governance milestones included the completion of our ONCA transition and, most importantly, the hiring of Penny Chatson as our incoming Executive Director, effective July 2025. There is no doubt that with Penny's leadership and deep commitment to our mission and values, will ensure WR continues to thrive. I wish her much success in her new role.

After 30 years, it has been an honour and privilege to serve Women's Resources. I extend my heartfelt thanks to my teacher and mentor, Judith Moses, our incredible management team, Board, staff, donors, and community for your unwavering dedication to ending violence against women. I leave with full confidence in the future of this remarkable organization.

With deepest appreciation,

Lori Watson, Executive Director



*Lori Watson,
Outgoing Executive Director*

Incoming ED Report

Penny Chatson

It is both an honour and a profound responsibility to step into the role of Executive Director. Having worked at WR for over 25 years (10 of those years in a management capacity), I have had the privilege of working alongside our dedicated team and witnessing the strength and courage of the women and children we support.

This internal transition enables me to assume the Executive Director role with a deep understanding of our programs, staff, and community partners, while also acknowledging the need to grow into new leadership responsibilities with openness and transparency, and a clear vision.

Transition Reflections

While much of the work remains familiar, the transition into executive leadership has prompted me to take a step back and view the organization through a broader, more strategic lens. I have begun:

- Meeting individually with managers across all departments to listen and learn from their experiences and ideas
- Reviewing our operational and strategic plans to identify key areas where we can build capacity and sustainability
- Engaging with partners and funders to reaffirm relationships and communicate the changes in leadership
- Collaborate with finance to review budget performance year-to-date and ensure financial stability

Board Partnership

I am deeply grateful for the trust this Board has placed in me and for their ongoing commitment to our mission. While this role brings its share of urgency and complexity, I am entering with optimism and resolve. Together with staff, survivors, community partners, and this board, I believe we can strengthen our impact, amplify the voices of survivors, and shape a safer future for the women and children we serve in our community.

With gratitude,

Penny Chatson, Executive Director



*Penny Chatson,
Incoming
Executive Director*



*La-Ferne Powell,
Residential Services Manager*

Finance Committee Report

Committee Members:

Johnnie Harris (Chair), Samantha Burke, Diana Ingram (Finance Director), Lori Watson, (Executive Director)

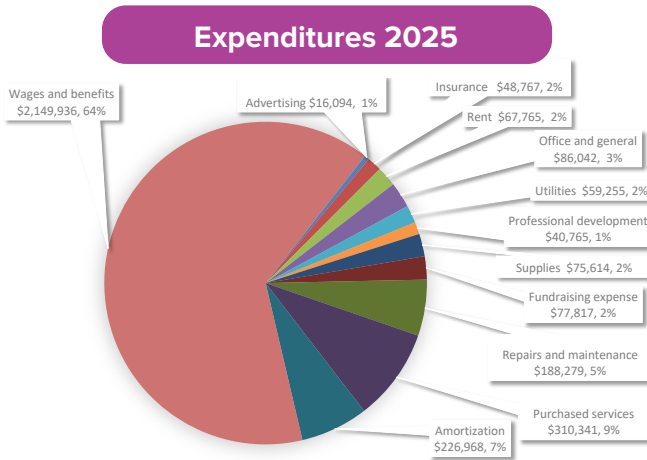
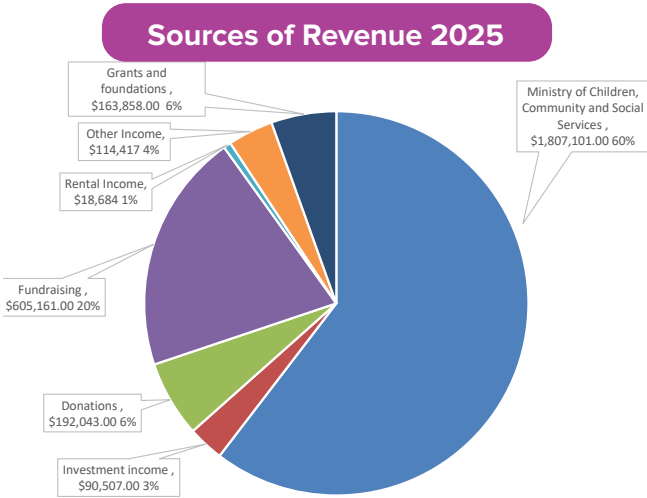
As we conclude the 2024–2025 fiscal year, Women’s Resources of Kawartha Lakes remains committed to supporting women and children in our community through compassionate and accessible services. This year marked continued progress and resilience as we worked hard to maintain our financial position.

Our annual income was again supported by program funding through MCCSS as well as investment income with a portfolio that continues to trend positively thanks to the skillful management of Diana Ingram, our Finance Director. Vicky Values sales surpassed our projected income once again, indicating consistent community engagement. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we were able to raise more than \$373,000 in donations (not including Vicky’s Values income). Lori’s Place is now operating at full capacity generating offset rental income. All these positive results mean that we can better support women and children experiencing abuse.

This fiscal year did present some financial challenges, particularly with legal costs due to unionization and collective bargaining not covered by the Ministry. The union contract is soon to be finalized and, going forward, we will work towards replenishing our reserve funds.

Looking ahead to the coming year, we will continue to strengthen our financial foundation through a creative fundraising plan, grant and foundation applications and increased community awareness through our website and social media platforms. We will align our financial objectives with the organization’s strategic plan, focusing on sustainability.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Women’s Resources staff, volunteers, donors, and partners. Your support helps us offer safety, shelter, and assistance to the women and children who rely on our programs and services.



HR Committee Report



Janette Woolley, Chair

Committee Members:

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

This year the HR Committee continued to review and update the agency plans, procedures and policies which is an annual requirement. This review included the Emergency Preparedness Plan for all locations, including Lori’s Place Second Stage Housing which is now fully operational.

The Committee continues to meet monthly as required. Collectively we worked on providing input to the Recruitment Committee who were responsible for selecting a new Executive Director to replace Lori Watson who was retiring in June after almost 30 years at Women’s Resources. We updated our Terms of Reference, and created a new workplan to reflect the priorities for the HR Committee based on the new Strategic Plan.

We continued to provide support to both Lori, the Outgoing Executive Director, and Penny Chatson, the Incoming Executive Director, welcoming Penny to our meetings once she was chosen as the successful candidate. The union collective agreement is being finalized and we look forward to working together with the new contract in place.

The Committee would like to recognize the extraordinary work that Women’s Resources does on a daily basis. It is the combined commitment of each person within the organization that enables the agency to provide the support and services to the women and children in need. Thank you to everyone for all that you do.

Advocacy and Governance Report

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

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

The Advocacy Committee of Women's Resources is dedicated to promoting safety, equality, and empowerment for women through public policy influence, education, and collaboration. Comprising three board members and the Executive Director, the committee made significant strides this year.

Key activities included:

- **Engagement with City Officials:** The committee followed up on past letters expressing concern that Women's Resources was not consulted in the City of Kawartha Lakes' Strategic and Community Safety Plans. A positive meeting with the City's CAO and Human Services Director led to a promising commitment for future collaboration.
- **Board Development:** A survey assessed board members' training needs. The committee is committed to recommending development opportunities and advocacy trends.
- **Femicide Awareness:** The OAITH femicide report was introduced to the board, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and preventing gender-based violence. Members are encouraged to review it monthly to stay connected to the organization's mission.
- **Period Product Access Initiative:** In partnership with the Period Purse and local libraries, the committee launched a project to distribute free menstrual products across 14 branches, reaching women in both urban and rural areas. Special recognition was given to board member Johnine Harris for her outstanding dedication to the initiative.

Looking ahead to the next year I am confident in the success of this committee as they work through the priorities in the strategic plan.

Starting this committee and providing the leadership to advocate for change has been the most rewarding experience for me during my time on the board. I am grateful to have worked with women who shared my passion and commitment to advocacy.

Our voice and actions made a difference.

This year 2024-2025, the Governance Committee, at the direction of the Board, continued as a full committee of the Board. The main objectives of the Governance Committee are oversight and review, to support compliance of the policies and practices of the organization, according to the organization's current strategic plan.

As with every year, the committee reviewed its terms of reference and set 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 following up on action items and completion of other tasks assigned by the Executive committee.



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 Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). The edited bylaws have been reviewed by our lawyer, then by the Committee; they have gone to the Board for ratification, then were presented at our AGM. The committee now has the task of reviewing and updating the new bylaws for compliance with the Board's Operations manual.

Shirley Norman
Chair



Fund Development Report

2024 was a year filled with lots of new things. In May we hosted the grand opening of Lori's Place Second Stage Housing in Lindsay, which was much anticipated throughout our agency and the community. A newly renovated, beautiful facility that has full occupancy now with six, rent geared-to-income apartments and so many other amenities. A proud moment for Women's Resources after 2 years of raising funds to complete it. Thank you to our generous community and other wonderful funders who made this a reality.

Our fundraising budget for 2024.25 was \$725,000. This includes Vicky's Values Thrift Boutique and various other sources. I'm very pleased to say we exceeded this and raised \$900,635. How grateful we are for all those who made this possible.

Our 13th Annual Marquee Event featuring country brother and sister duo, The Reklaws, was held on March 7, 2024 at the FLATO Academy Theatre and was our most financially successful Marquee raising more than \$28,000 after expenses thanks to our wonderful sponsors and those who attended the event. The concert was incredible – a true party on the stage!



The Reklaws, 13th Marquee Event

The 8th year for our Annual CASH PLUS RAFFLE! raised over \$22,000. First Prize was \$5,000, Second Prize, a 2 Night Stay at Sir Sam's Inn and Spa in Haliburton (worth \$500 – many thanks for this generous donation!) plus we added \$500 spending money as well as our Third Prize of \$500. A shout-out to the many businesses and individuals who sold tickets on our behalf and, of course to those who purchased them. Something exciting I would like to share is that we are switching to online ticket sales for the 2025/26 fiscal year so stay tuned.

Other income received throughout the year to make up our fundraising total budget includes Unsolicited Donations, Memorials, the Christmas fund and Children's fund totaling \$43,299. We again thank our generous community for this as well as for the \$147,472 raised through Direct Mail, Third Party Events, Grants & Foundations and Break Open Tickets sold at The Open Grocery on Queen Street. There was also \$27,500 raised early in the fiscal year for Lori's Place capital expenses as well as \$31,365 towards Lori's Place general expenses.

In Fund Development there were some staff changes. Sadly, Maggie, my Fundraising Assistant for the past four years, resigned to go back to school and she was missed greatly. In August we hired Holly Medeiros as the Fund Development Manager. This position was developed as a succession plan in anticipation of my retirement in 2026. Holly is a whiz at social media, much needed for advertising and promotion. She also has many years of management skills along with a host of wonderful ideas to refresh the annual fundraising plan. Part of Holly's position is overseeing Vicky's Values Thrift Boutique and with help from Kelly Stockdale, Vicky's Coordinator, has developed some new and exciting ideas to keep things current in a competitive retail environment. Holly will be reporting on Vicky's separately in this Annual Report, but I would like to mention that the store brought in \$512,000 last year. Wow!

We are so fortunate to have the incredible number of 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

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 2025: 55 | Children: 40

Average Occupancy 80%

Women sheltered since 1992: 3,020 | Children: 2,390

Crisis Support Calls in 2025: 1,536

Crisis Support Calls since 1992: 43,797

Victoria's provides a safe environment where survivors of domestic violence can begin to heal and rebuild their lives. The shelter offers more than just a secure place to stay; we provide emotional support, counselling, legal and housing advocacy. Trained staff work to empower women, helping them regain dignity and make informed decisions to plan for a future free from abuse. For their children, the shelter offers a nurturing environment, educational support, and trauma-informed care to help them recover from the emotional impact of witnessing/experiencing violence in their home. Above all, Victoria's is a place of hope, safety, and new beginnings.

EDUCATION & RESOURCE LIBRARY

We are committed to raising awareness and preventing violence against women through public education and community engagement. Our initiatives include public speaking on topics such as gender-based violence, consent, healthy relationships, and mindfulness, as well as media outreach and educational materials. The on-site resource library is open during office hours and offers free two-week borrowing of a variety of print and multimedia resources to support community learning and advocacy.



FAMILY COURT SUPPORT

Our Family Court Support program provides trauma-informed, one-on-one assistance to women navigating the complexities of the family court system. The dedicated FCS worker offers court accompaniment and helps clients access legal resources, ensuring that women feel supported, informed, and empowered throughout the legal process.

Women served in 2025: 186

Women served since 2019: 1,137

LORI'S PLACE

Lori's second-stage housing provides six safe and supportive units specifically for women and their children who are fleeing abuse. Designed as a transitional living space, the facility offers a secure environment where residents can begin to heal from trauma while working toward long-term stability. Each unit is rent-gated to income and is self-contained, allowing for privacy and independence. Shared support services, such as counselling, legal advocacy, children's counselling, and life skills programs are available on-site to help women and children rebuild their lives. Lori's is not just a stop on the journey rather it is where the journey toward breaking the cycle of violence and empowerment truly begins.

Women served in 2025: 10 | Children: 11

Community Services

COUNSELLING & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Women's Resources provides crisis and support counselling, advocacy, information, and referral services from an anti-oppression perspective for women affected by abuse. We offer individual counselling and support groups to address the impacts of abuse on daily life. Our community-based supports focus on housing, employment, life skills, parenting, and wellness, helping women rebuild their lives through personalized and empowering guidance.

Women served in 2025: 552

Women served since 1993: 18,994



Programs & Services

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

COUNSELLING FOR TEENS

Women's Resources offers crisis and support counselling for teen girls and boys aged 10–16 who have been exposed to abuse. Our individual sessions address the unique challenges youth face, supporting the development of positive self-esteem and healthy relationships. In addition, we deliver a children's program that promotes safety, security, confidentiality, and holistic well-being within a feminist framework.

Teens served in 2025: 54

Teens served since 2007: 665



CHILD WITNESS

We provide a skill-building group program for children who have witnessed or experienced violence in the home, in partnership with a local children's mental health provider. Research shows that witnessing violence can impact a child's emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Through role-playing and play-based learning, children build conflict resolution skills. Our program integrates evidence-based strategies to break cycles of violence and promote resilience in families.

Women served in 2025: 18 | Children: 68

Women served since 2000: 630 | Children: 1,085



ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

Women's Resources delivers a trauma-informed program for survivors of human trafficking, offering counselling, advocacy, referrals, and life skills development in a safe and confidential environment. We provide targeted education and outreach to adults and youth at risk of trafficking aimed at breaking the cycle of exploitation. We offer individualized support for survivors that includes job training and emotional healing. Community-based prevention and support initiatives help foster long-term resilience and recovery.

Women served in 2025: 30 | Youth served in 2025: 12

Women served since 2020: 77 | Youth served since 2020: 411

VOLUNTEERS

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

We are always in need of volunteers to assist in many areas. These include: Customer service and donation processing at Vicky's Values Thrift Boutique, children's programming, Fundraising, shopping and gardening at the shelter, administrative support, special events, Board member on our Board of Directors.

For more information about volunteer opportunities, email: volunteer@womensresources.ca

Volunteers in 2025: 119

Volunteer hours in 2025: 14,705

Total volunteer hours since 1992: 308,187.65



VICKY'S VALUES Thrift Boutique

As we celebrate our 31st year, Vicky's Values continues to thrive as a cornerstone of Women's Resources and the local community. Built on the foundation of women supporting women, providing high quality thrift at the most affordable prices is the goal and this year we are elated to have brought in \$512,000 in sales.

Not only do we have the best deals, but we are also proud to provide free essential items to women accessing our services—through gift certificates and our housewares program for those rebuilding their lives after abuse. Nearly \$10,000 in client gift certificates were redeemed this year – a true testament to Vicky's Values being a space of affordability, dignity, and connection.

Vicky's Values is staffed by 5 dedicated team members and supported by more than 100 volunteers. Our volunteers are the heart of our success, bringing diverse skills and unwavering commitment.

In 2024-25 operational changes streamlined services that helped to increase profits. More special events were added to engage the community as well as a dedicated Facebook page allowing us to reach new audiences. Sage Kitchen, volunteer-turned-employee, was hired to enhance these positive changes.

In the coming year we look forward to growing even more with new monthly events such as a Maker's Market as well as exploring live online selling to reach even more shoppers.

To our volunteers, customers and supporters, we appreciate everything you do! **THANK YOU!**

Holly Medeiros

Fund Development Manager

Kelly Stockdale

Vicky's Values Operations Supervisor



*"Christmas
in July"
July 25, 2025*



VICKY'S
VALUES
THRIFT BOUTIQUE

Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00am - 4:00pm
50 Mary St. W., Lindsay, ON.



Donations gratefully accepted
at the purple donation door
Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00am - 2:00pm



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.

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.

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

2025

Lori Watson retires on June 30, 2025 after 30 years as ED. Penny Chatson, having been with WR for 25 years, is chosen as incoming ED.

Working Together Supporting Women
Building Community Working Together
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