

Ishtar
Transition Housing Society

2020
2021
ANNUAL REPORT

“We see you. We believe you.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.”

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I. MISSION



Our Mission

To honour, embrace and celebrate the power, resilience, courage and knowledge of all women. We work collaboratively for systemic change where equality means inclusion, opportunity and accessibility for all. We work together locally for a world where all women and girls are safe emotionally, mentally, financially, physically, sexually, spiritually and culturally.



II. MESSAGES

Message from the Executive Director



One year into the pandemic, April 2021, I accepted the opportunity to join Ishtar and became the fourth executive director of the society that year. Although I'm introducing the report for this AGM, I was not here in 2020. I assure you, I am here now.

The hiring committee gave me a detailed account of the operations of Ishtar and were generous with their time and support. I am grateful for the support of the board members and the hard work of the chair, Lynn Downie When I began, I was concerned about leading a team when the pandemic would make face-to-face meetings impossible. I decided we would follow all COVID protocols; however, I would come into the office daily. The team supported me by returning to work on site most of the time. We always observed COVID protocols while working from the office. This allowed us to get to know each other while maintaining social distancing. The pandemic gave me the opportunity to learn from the team, to hear their stories and concerns, and most importantly, to listen to their dreams for Ishtar. I am grateful to work with all of these fine women.

Each day at Ishtar offers new challenges. I am confident that this team working together, listening, and learning together will continue to keep vulnerable women and their children safe.

Respectfully Submitted,
Maureen Berlin

Message from the Director of Operations

As I reflect upon the last year at Ishtar, I note there has been many challenges to face, especially for women and families in the community that are fleeing abuse. When COVID hit it really exaggerated the already difficult barriers the families we support face daily. We know that domestic violence was at an all time high for women and children who were forced to stay home and isolate for weeks at a time with little support or safety. Lack of safe space, affordable housing, financial aid, and limited access to social services agencies would put families in an extremely vulnerable situation. At Ishtar we re-evaluated the services we provide and how we provide it. COVID made it difficult for us to meet with women and children, but we persisted and managed to find creative innovative solutions to meet in a safe and secure setting. Some examples include purchasing technology through grant applications for staff to work from home, providing technology to women and children, meeting outside or in larger spaces, following COVID protocols, but always finding a way to get the information and support to the women we serve. It is so rewarding to see our staff come together to bring energy, enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience, to support women and children using a client-centered approach, while always keeping Ishtar's values at the front and center of their thoughts. I took on the new role as a Manager of Non-Residential Services in August but have worked at Ishtar for 19 years and started as a transition house support worker. I feel honoured to work alongside and collaborate with my coworkers, our funders, like minded community agencies, and Ishtar Board of Directors as we all navigated these trying and scary times, to provide a safe place for the most vulnerable persons in our community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mardell Donelly

Message from the Outreach Worker

In the last year, I look back and have seen a lot of changes for Ishtar Women's Resource Society; a new office, new coordinators at both of the Transition Houses, and new staff at our administration office including a new Executive Director, and Director of Operations. Despite all those changes, as we approach our 50th year of existence, we are embracing the changes while still cherishing the values that we have held dear as a grass roots women's organization in Langley. Those values of Integrity, Honesty, Trust and Respect are what build on our relationships with the women we work with, in the past, present and future. I know as a long term staff member at Ishtar Women's Resource Society that we hope to build on these relationships with a future of safe, secure, and affordable housing for women and their families, as well as new services for women to access that will empower them to move forward positively.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Hossack-redden



Message from the PEACE Program Coordinator



The past year, has been a year of change and resilience, for Ishtar Women's Resource Society. The staff, clients and residents have proven to be adaptable and resilient in the face COVID. Ishtar as a whole saw residential services and counselling services consider provincial closures and ever changing COVID protocols with diligence and compassion. Ishtar staff rose to the challenge of providing safe and appropriate services in the face of many changing health protocols. Staff adapted their approaches to working with clients and residents, meeting in parks, on-line, and larger spaces. Through grants, Ishtar was able to provide technology devices to staff and clients to maintain contact and provide services. The technology and other practices will be used for years to come as it has become another tool staff regularly uses. As the year progressed so did Ishtar. I am so proud of the staff and society for being so adaptable and progressive. As I write this, I realize I have been with Ishtar for almost 29 years, and in that time do not recall when staff have come together to support each other, the clients and residents of Ishtar and the community of Langley in such a compassionate, strong and thoughtful approach. I can say that I am truly proud to be a member of Ishtar's staff team.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rena Andronek

Message from the Board President 2021

It has been an honour and privilege to serve as Board Chair for the last 3 years. I wantto thank everyone who has supported me in my role as President. We have had many challenges and seen a lot of changes this year at Ishtar, dealing with the pandemic and getting our house in order.

In April of this year the Ishtar Board of Directors were successful in the recruitment of a new Executive Director. Maureen Berlin accepted the offer for the position of Executive Director for Ishtar Women's Resource Society, effective April 6th.

Maureen comes to Ishtar with many years working in the Nonprofit Sector. She has recently worked as an Executive Director at Big Brother/Big Sisters and Interim Executive Director at Sara for Women. She recently completed her contract as the Director of Community Relations at the University of the Fraser Valley. We are confident that Maureen will guide Ishtar into the future so that Ishtar continues to meet the needs and of the women and children who depend on us being there for them.

Earlier this year we were please to offer Bailey Keeler a position on the Board, she kindly accepted. She brings a wide range of knowledge with her. She currently works for Victims Services in New Westminster.

I want to recognize the incredible dedicated women who make up the Ishtar Board. Thank you Stacey, Kathy, Melanie, Dawn-Marie and Bailey for all your help and support. All the Board Members took part in a Board Training day, focussing on Governance and Fiduciary responsible. A Board Policy Manual was developed and approved by the Board and is current with the Board's and the Executive

Director's roles and responsibilities. The Board Members also got to tour the houses and meet staff.

Board Meetings are slowly returning to in person meetings. Updating Ishtar's Strategic Plan is a top priority and hopefully will be ready for presentation in the spring.

And what can we say about our incredible staff. The circumstances surrounding COVID have added enormous stress to already stressful jobs. The staff have stepped up to meet the needs of the women and children who depend on Ishtar, in person, by phone, video chats and off site. Thank you on behalf of everyone you serve.

Ishtar continues to have discussions with BC Housing regarding Second Stage Housing for Langley. We hope that approvals will be received in the near future to begin construction on this very much needed facility.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to our Members, Volunteers, Donors and Community Partners for their ongoing support of our work in helping the women and their children who continue to experience gender-based violence in our community.

And to all the women who are still living with abuse; reach out, don't give up, make the phone call. We will be here. Your life and the lives of your children depend on you taking the first step. We will do our best to keep you and yours safe and provide you with the tools you need to stop the cycle of violence and become a survivor. Ishtar will be by your side in each step. You do not have to be alone.

And finally I need to say goodbye, my time at Ishtar has come to an end. I need time to focus on myself and my family. Ishtar is in a good place now, great staff, new Executive Director and a very dedicated and professional Board.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lynn Downie

> "Here's to strong women. May we know them. May we be them. May we raise them."
>
> - Unknown



III. ISHTAR TRANSITION HOUSE



Introduction

In recent months, we have all been faced with unpredictable challenges and health safety concerns that have threatened our society as a whole. In light of these challenges, women have been pushed further as they face more dire realities of daily survival and with seeking safety and shelter from violence. Much like the resiliency of women, Ishtar has transitioned and overcome a year that was filled with obstacles and problem solving. We have managed to surpass this challenging time by rebuilding a concrete environment based on sound teamwork and compassion for women and children.

Though there were many accomplishments throughout this year, this report will focus on three major areas: pandemic precautions and protocols, re-evaluating priorities, and safe transitions.



Pandemic Challenges

The pandemic has largely affected the transition house by creating additional barriers for women and children. Ishtar worked alongside management to better serve women by creating a safe environment without eliminating any support or resources due to the heavy restrictions. Staff took precautions and implemented creative measures that would allow full access with staff at the house. For example, if either women or staff did not feel comfortable sitting in an indoor setting, the gazebo or deck were great alternatives. Staff also maintained a relationship with women by participating in activities that allowed for social distancing, such as crafts and gardening. Furthermore, staff took extra precautions in their personal life knowing that their level of exposure would impact the women staying at Ishtar.



Prioritizing

During the month of July 2020, Ishtar had a devastating occurrence where one of the residents passed away in the home. Staff mourned the loss of our resident and faced many challenged with the sudden and unexpected passing. After this passing, Ishtar became more vigilant and educated ourselves on the importance of harm reduction.

Today, staff are taking extra precautions and enforcing more of a harm reduction approach and prioritizing building rapport with the women. Staff have learned how to respectfully participate in conversations that allow women to feel comfortable enough to share that they are using substances. In doing so, staff members are able to develop transparent relationships that allow for appropriate safety plans. This has also created a non-judgemental atmosphere where women are much more likely to share additional information that allows them to further succeed in their transition.

Safe Transition

Considering the hardships that women endure, along with the struggles of the pandemic, staff have converted Ishtar House into a home where women feel safe and begin their journey of transition at a rapid pace. In comparison to previous years, women are now residing at Ishtar for a longer period of time. As a result, women have gained more confidence and secured housing that allows for a safer transition. Table A, below, displays a brief overlay of the importance of a transition house. With a limited number of beds, each crisis call and/or space call is still responded to with the same level of empathy and support given to the women who are residing at Ishtar.



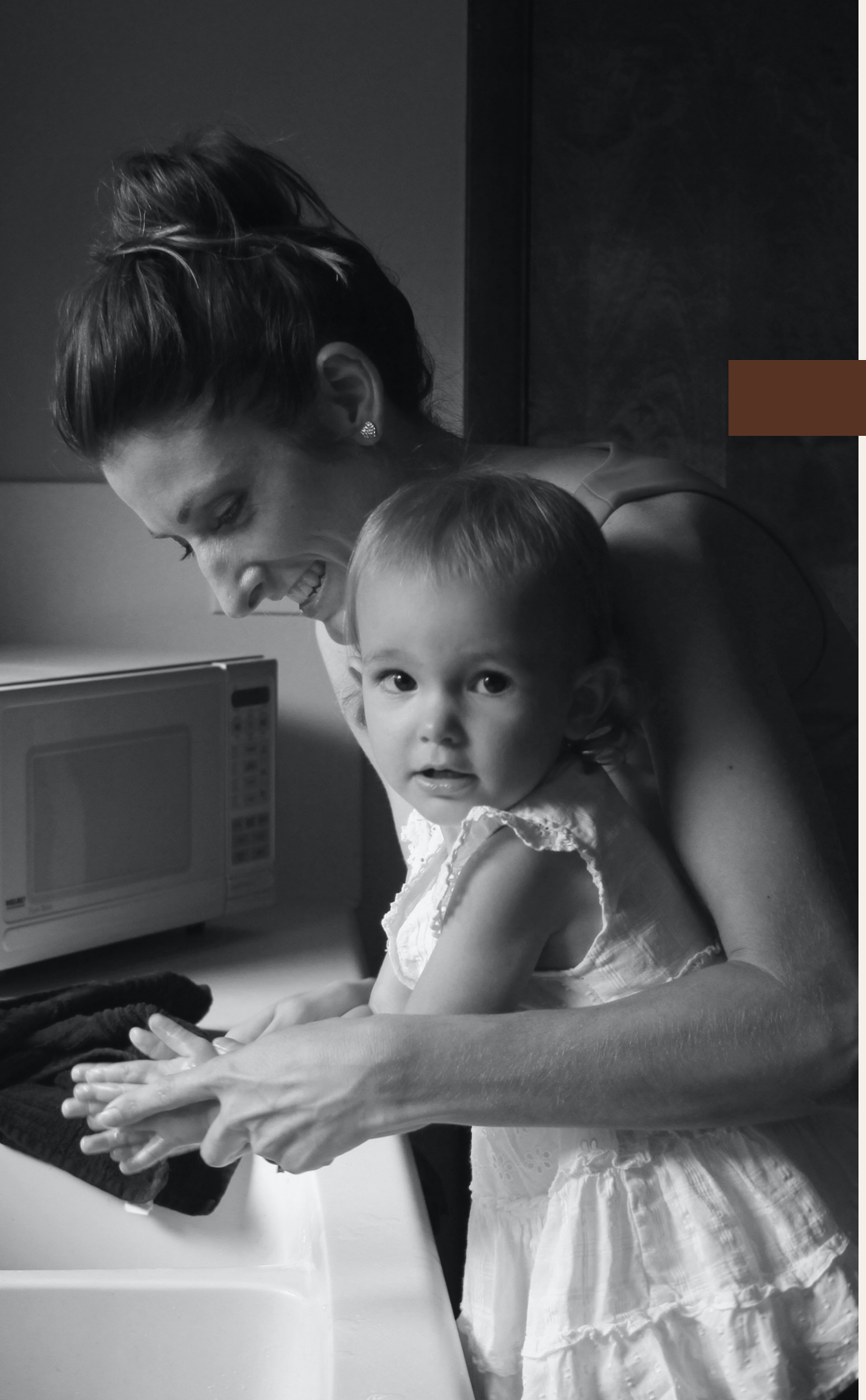


Conclusion

In conclusion, this year has been filled with great challenges that have tested the strength of the women who access the resources at Ishtar, and the staff as well. The positive environment and teamwork have created a healthy home where all women are thriving and utilizing the resources provided. Although there is a long way to go, I am confident that with teamwork and collaboration, there will be many more accomplishments to celebrate.

Table A: Ishtar Statistical Information

TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS	APRIL - JUNE 2020	221	***TOTAL: 1046***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	399	
	OCT - DEC 2020	218	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	208	
TOTAL NUMBER OF SPACE CALLS	APRIL - JUNE 2020	62	***TOTAL: 260***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	75	
	OCT - DEC 2020	69	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	54	
TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN & CHILDREN HOUSED AT ISHTAR	APRIL - JUNE 2020	15	***TOTAL: 65***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	19	
	OCT - DEC 2020	20	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	11	
TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN & CHILDREN TURNED AWAY DUE TO LACK OF SPACE	APRIL - JUNE 2020	47	***TOTAL: 195***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	56	
	OCT - DEC 2020	49	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	43	



IV. LIBRA TRANSITION HOUSE

It has been another exciting and eventful year at Ishtar Women's Resource Society. Even though we have been working through the 1st, 2nd and 3rd wave of covid staff has pulled together as a team to support the women to the best of their ability. Keeping an upbeat and positive atmosphere while maintaining covid protocols and helping women to achieve their self determined goals.

Libra was able to beautify the backyard with a beautiful new garden that staff worked hard to plant. We also received a very generous donation from LiveSwitch Inc. to go towards a new playground for the back yard. The current playground will be removed to make way for this upgrade.

We had a few repairs that needed to be made this year. We ended up with a minor flood after our septic tank backed up due the lines not being cleared. Staff worked quickly and had our septic service company here within a matter of hours to clear the lines and staff worked to clean up the mess inside the house before having a crew come to the house to sanitize everything. We now get the lines cleared on a regular basis. We also had some work done on our furnace after one of the dampers was stuck open. Luckily this only affected the temperature in one room that wasn't in use at the time so the residents weren't bothered by this at all.



The schedules were changed at both Transition Houses so that both houses have the same schedules and number of part and full time shifts. This resulted in 4 different shift blocks every day. The change was done to create some more stability and structure for the women in the houses and staff as well. It also makes filling shifts and hiring new employees simpler.

There was quite a changeover in staffing in the last year which has allowed staff to take on leadership roles at the Transition Houses. Although it was difficult at times to navigate through all the changes the staff rallied together not only to support the women living at the Transition House but also to support one another. Mary Kargas left her role as Manager of Residential Services and Mardel Donnelly stepped in temporarily to ensur that the houses were running smoothly in the absence of management. In March Megan Comey was hired as Residence Coordinator for both Transition Houses.

The Outreach Program at Ishtar has taken over the hotel program in Langley and it has been a very beneficial to all the women and children residing there.





The houses have also partnered with our outreach workers and STV counsellors so that they can work in the house. By coming to the house to work with women they are reducing barriers that might otherwise prevent them from accessing services. At Libra House there was even enough space to make an additional office for outreach and STV to work out of when needed.

The Housing crisis has greatly affected the women and children that live in the Transition Houses. We extended our typical length of stay from 30 to 45 days and are still needing to give most women extensions as affordable housing simply is not available to them. Women struggle to remain hopeful about finding housing in their budget and we are seeing them return back to partners or into less desirable housing situations due to the lack of safe affordable housing.

BC Housing has asked that we run at a limited capacity during the pandemic and so for the last year both houses have a capacity of 10 residents. We continue to run at capacity much of the time. Statistical information included in the attached chart.

Respectfully Submitted,
Megan Comey
Residence Coordinator

Table B: Libra Statistical Information

TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS	APRIL - JUNE 2020	311	***TOTAL: 1118***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	227	
	OCT - DEC 2020	275	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	305	
TOTAL NUMBER OF SPACE CALLS	APRIL - JUNE 2020	146	***TOTAL: 586***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	158	
	OCT - DEC 2020	135	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	147	
TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN & CHILDREN HOUSED AT LIBRA	APRIL - JUNE 2020	21	***TOTAL: 83***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	25	
	OCT - DEC 2020	22	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	15	
TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN & CHILDREN TURNED AWAY DUE TO LACK OF SPACE	APRIL - JUNE 2020	90	***TOTAL: 261***
	JULY - SEPTEMBER 2020	28	
	OCT - DEC 2020	53	
	JAN - MARCH 2021	90	



V. OUTREACH



Outreach

In our last fiscal year, the Community Outreach Program was staffed permanently by Sarah Hossack-Redden, and since January 2021 by Gagan Gill. This year has been incredibly busy for our Outreach staff, as we experienced a sharp increase of calls for support around women who were experiencing greater instances of abuse. The Outreach team provides information and advocacy around family law, housing, food security, and financial resources; which were all in a much greater need in the last year. During this period, they carried a case load of ***130*** women; answered ***10,044*** calls, emails or text messages to provide information and referrals; and attended ***689*** appointments with women. Additionally, the Outreach Team began working at each of the transition houses one day a week; continue to provide naloxone training and kits to women in the community; and have further built up relationships in the community, as well as surrounding communities which have further supported the women that we work with.



Domestic Violence Liaison

This program has continued to support women who have been impacted by intimate partner violence and also have involvement with one of Langley's two child protection agencies: The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and Langley's Delegated Aboriginal Agency, the Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services (FVACFSS). During this fiscal year, the program was permanently staffed by Madison Candline at a full-time capacity.

During the fiscal year, this program received 50 referrals; 22 referrals from MCFD, 8 referrals from FVACFSS, 18 internal referrals from other Ishtar programs and 2 self referrals. This program tracks phone calls, text messages, emails and appointments with a time frame rather then how many times contact was made. The table below outlines the hours spent. The time spent on in person appointments was significantly lower due to the impacts of COVID-19 and working remotely.

342 HR. Phone Call & Appointments

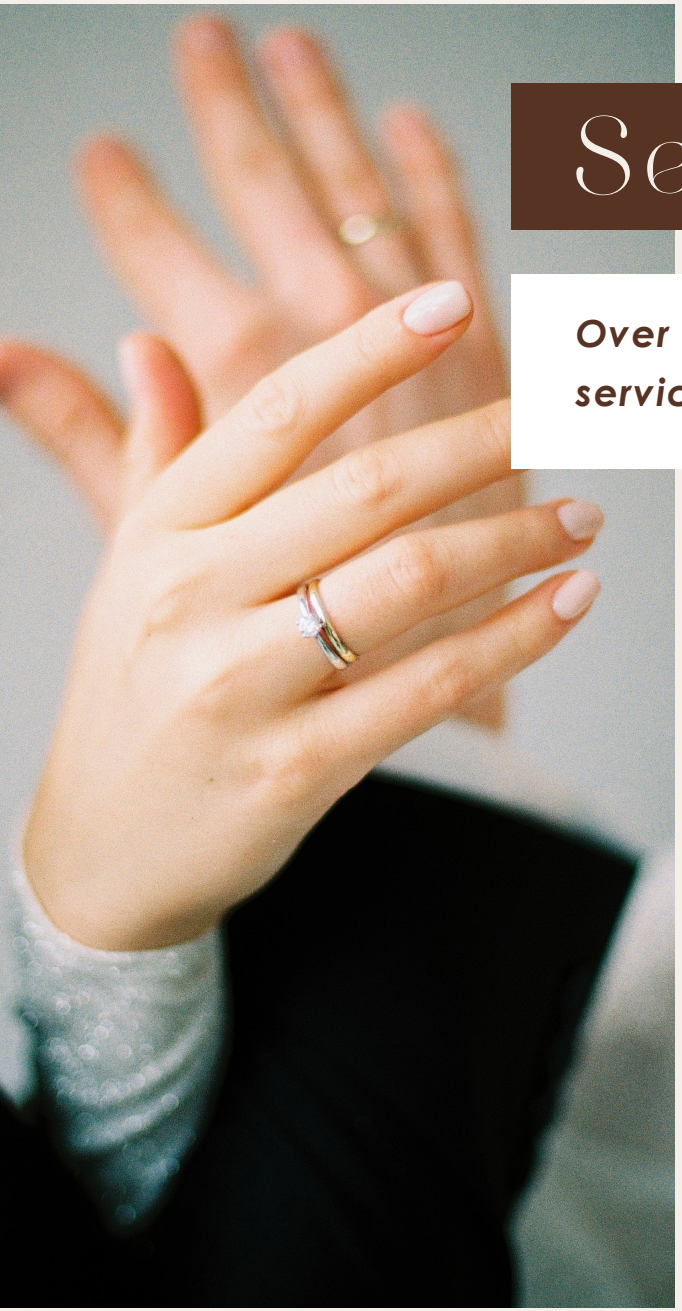
575.50 HR. Text Messages

100.50 HR. Emails

Respectfully submitted,
Jen Pollon
Current Women's Support Services Coordinator



VI. STV PROGRAM



Service Delivery

Over the past year, the STV counselling team has delivered the following services to women accessing our program:

1253 scheduled individual counselling sessions

36 group counselling sessions

136 new intakes for counselling

4829 unscheduled phone and email contacts

An additional 366 individual and group counselling or intake sessions were scheduled, but not delivered because women experienced barriers to attending appointments. Some of the typical barriers to attending appointments that women report include:

1. No childcare
2. Difficulties accessing or discomfort in accessing remote services
3. Having to prioritize housing, family/criminal court, or accessing food bank over counselling
4. Work conflicts
5. Chronic and acute health issues resulting from abuse and violence
6. Abusive partner prevents her from attending appointments
7. Ambivalence—reaching out to book an appointment is often a big step on its own, and it may take several attempts before a woman feels she is truly ready/safe enough to begin attending



Refferals/Waitlists/Service Overview

Women referred to the STV program are invited to complete an intake appointment to determine that they fit the mandate of the program, to gather information on her current needs, and assess her safety. During the intake appointment, if a woman indicates that she is still at risk of ongoing abuse and violence (e.g. she is still living with an abusive partner) she will be prioritized for a full round of 24 individual counselling sessions and she will typically be connected with a counsellor within a week or two. If a woman indicates that she is no longer in an abusive situation but has recently left, or recently experienced an assault, or there are a number of other high-risk factors present, the woman will be prioritized for 4-8 short term sessions, while being placed on the long-term waitlist for 24 sessions. These short-term

sessions are focused on safety planning, and building trauma informed coping strategies. All other women are waitlisted for an individual counselling space, and over the past year the wait time has fluctuated from between 5 and 12 months. During the 2019/20 fiscal year, 304 women were referred to our program. In contrast, this fiscal year, 260 women were referred to our program, representing an intriguing decrease. Anecdotal report from women who did complete the referral process, as well as other agency support workers suggests that under the pressures of the economic and practical strains created by COVID-19 and the ongoing housing and income support crisis in BC, women who desperately need emotional and psychological support have been forced to triage their concerns, and focus on the above areas. Additionally, similar reports indicate hesitance on the part of some to engage in what is a deeply emotionally vulnerable and relational process through an online or telephone format. The ways women have chosen to access services has also shifted this year according to needs and demands arising in the pandemic. Individual sessions increased, while group attendance decreased slightly. Women expressed valuing both formats, but strongly expressed looking forward to a return to in-person based groups. The biggest change in service delivery was in the significant increase in between session contacts by phone and email, which grew by nearly 90%. Counsellors chose to increase these contacts to support women struggling with increased isolation, rising safety concerns related to isolation, offering additional coping resourcing between sessions, and to address the needs of women who simply could not make time for a full session with children at home. These additional contacts have been a lifeline of connection this year.



Our top five referral sources for the STV program in ranking order are other Ishtar staff members, other community agencies, family and friends, adult mental health services, law enforcement officials and crisis lines. At the end of the fiscal year, we had 71 women waiting for individual counselling. This is a very welcome 36% decrease from the previous year. This decrease is likely the result of the ongoing internship training program and new staff hires.

This year we adapted to offering group therapy services remotely (see below in COVID-19 section for more). Due to privacy and security risks inherent in conducting therapy work online, the STV team opted to return to closed group format to avoid any possible security breaches associated with a drop in style group. This year we ran 4 closed groups. The first online group was on Building Resilience, chosen and adapted to the remote format specifically to address the additional coping struggles of women in the pandemic. Two groups were on Understanding Abuse in Relationships. This group was repeated due to demand, and the need for women to engage in consciousness raising around their experiences of abuse in a collective format. The second round of this group was adapted slightly to meet the specific needs of the women attending, focusing most on addressing court-based abuse ongoing post-separation. We also ran our Self Compassion during the fall and winter months, and the women in attendance expressed particularly valuing addressing this topic during some of the more difficult months of the pandemic. All groups were well attended and averaged between 4 and 8 women weekly.



Community Involvement/Advocacy Actions

This year, the STV team continued to deepen community connections to ensure the best possible service to women, and increase awareness of the needs of women experiencing violence amongst potential community partners. The STV coordinator liaised with one of our main partners, Langley Community Services Society, delivering a community education session to staff focusing on understanding the increased risk for gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as brief assessment and safety planning practices both for survivors and potential abusers. The purpose of the session was to empower community partners to recognize the risk of violence, and be able to respond effectively. The STV program expanded the recruitment network for our internship program to include Simon Fraser University and City University of Seattle. As a result, the program received triple the typical number of

applications for STV internships, allowing for a competitive and highly selective hiring process, ensuring the highest quality of service delivery for STV clients. The STV coordinator participated in a community roundtable of service providers/internship placement supervisors. This annual roundtable invites professionals to offer feedback to counselling training programs regarding best practice in training new graduates in counselling psychology. This was an opportunity for the program coordinator to advocate for further inclusion of feminist and anti-oppressive lenses into graduate training, as well as more thorough understanding of the dynamics of gender-based violence. The STV team also engaged in advocacy work to address the issues of larger systemic injustice and structural violence that perpetuate and exacerbate violence in relationships. The STV coordinator participated in direct advocacy for survivors of gender-based violence by writing submissions on behalf of Ishtar Women's Resource Society to the federal finance committee and provincial government supporting the principles of a Just Recovery from COVID-19 including a gender-based analysis. Additionally, The STV coordinator contributed submissions on behalf of Ishtar Women's Resource Society to provincial ministers on a range of campaigns,including maintaining the 300$ increase to disability income, real rent control, increasing stock of affordable housing, universal 10$/day childcare, and universal guaranteed paid sick leave. The STV coordinator began a relationship with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, a broad-based advocacy group, to represent the interests and needs of women and children experiencing violence in policy development. This new connection represents a promising and unique opportunity for Ishtar to have a seat at the table in policy change relevant to the needs of the women and children we support.





Women's Counselling Staff

The counselling team experienced a number of transitions, and challenges this year. Between September 2020 and April 2021, the team was supported by two clinical interns completing their Masters of Counselling Psychology, who contributed immensely to program operations, taking on caseloads of individual clients from the STV waitlist, and co-facilitating groups. This clinical training program continues to offer mutual benefit to students in obtaining training and supervision; to the women we serve; and to the broader community as students receive guidance in practicing from a feminist and anti-oppressive lens. From April-November 2020, the team operated under the leadership of a coordinator covering a maternity leave in this position. In October 2020 the original coordinator submitted her resignation and the

program saw a break in the coordinator model, returning to this model in February 2021 based on the needs of the program. Additionally, one full-time staff member on a temporary contract was temporarily not renewed. While in the hiring process between November and mid-January, the team was staffed by one full-time worker, one part-time, and two interns, which resulted in some slow down in service. Between mid-January and February 2021, two additional full-time staff were hired—one on a permanent basis and a other on a temporary contract. Both new staff took on blended roles offering counselling to the regular STV community-based clients, and embedding in our two transition houses, and to offering supportive and crisis-based counselling to women during their stay. Both counsellors have been able to employ creative, arts-based and traditional healing approaches to engage women in the houses. The part-time STV intake coordinator/counsellor resigned her position, and one of the STV counselling interns was hired to take this role, maintaining a smooth transition and consistent service provision to women.



COVID-19

The STV program continued to adapt to the changing needs for service delivery in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the initial period of strict lock down of March-April 2020, our team was able to pivot to 100% remote services even before being fully outfitted with agency provided technology. Later in the fiscal year, much needed access was provided through the agency to additional technology supports that made this transition sustainable. In particular, agency provided laptop computers and cellphones allowed counsellors to practice from home in accordance with ethical and legal standards as well as best practicestandards for remote counselling with survivors of violence. In addition, the agency accessed secure remote

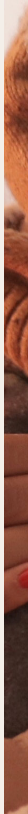


access to the server, which allowed for counsellors to be able to access necessary documents while working from home. Additionally, based on the research and planning of the STV coordinator, the agency purchased the telehealth version of Zoom, allowing for both individual and group counselling capability on an ongoing basis. Given the ongoing state of uncertainty regarding the resolution of the pandemic, it is likely that this service will need to renew for the current fiscal year.

Now one year into the pandemic, both the STV team members, and women we work with express a mixture of deep gratitude to be able to continue in our work, as well as difficulties in managing feelings of isolation and missing in-person supports/contact. The team continues to be responsive to public health directives, including re-opening a limited amount of in-office supports with the use of appropriate health protocols. While remote services have been vital to our work this year, and serve to decrease barriers for some clients, women also report a strong desire for in-person work, which aligns with best practice research in trauma specific counselling. As the pandemic progresses, and hopefully subsides in the next reporting period, the STV team will be reflecting on the changed face of service delivery and continuing to follow the voices of women regarding their needs for access.

This has been a unique, growth-producing, difficult, and inspiring year for the STV program. We continue to be humbled and uplifted in the work as we witness women's resistance to injustice, and walk with them in finding collective resilience to the increased risk and narrowing of resources presented by the pandemic. I take heart and find my ground in the commitment and dedication of my colleagues, and the courage of women to fight to take their lives back, to find compassion for themselves to access support, and find freedom from violence.

In solidarity,
Meredith Klemmensen
STV Program Coordinator/Counsellor





VII. PEACE PROGRAM

This past year has seen many challenges, successes and adaptation by staff and clients alike. The challenges of COVID and the closure of much of the province created a set of ci cumstances that showed me the resilience of staff and clients. The main office was closed for two months during the Covid lockdown, which meant staff needed to be in contact with clients via cell phones and computers. Thankfully the program was accepted through EVA BC for a grant for technology support during COVID. We were awarded two cellular devices along with a free service plan including data for a one-year term, which was later extended for another five months. With another grant, PEACE was able to purchase a laptop for working remotely. The program quickly adapted to the new technology, but for those who were unable to connect with technology, the Ishtar Society purchased multiple tablets to assist clients with accessing staff and programs. The program needed to become flexible and adapt to the many changes happening within the Society and the province. Clients were being seen via Doxy and then moved to the Zoom platform. Meetings within the Society and outside of the Society were either cancelled or held on Zoom



platforms. Trainings were switched to online, webinars or Zoom. As you can appreciate, connecting and working with children can be difficult, add to that a pandemic and having to meet virtually, this made life very different for many of our clients and staff. Being creative and finding ways to engage and keep children engaged had its challenges; some days were easier than others. Much of our time in the beginning was spent reassuring mothers and children that this was only temporary and there would be an eventual end to the pandemic. During this time, I was encouraged that many families began to spend quality time together and some sibling relationships were strengthened. For those for whom the online platform did not work or preferred to still meet one-on-one, we met in schools, parks, and libraries.

The challenges of multiple leaders taking charge of Ishtar, making changes and decisions impacted the Society and staff morale. The loss of long-time staff has impacted the PEACE program in many ways. In October 2020, a lay off happened from the program. A valued employee who had been with the PEACE program for 10 years was laid off, her skills were truly missed. With this abrupt staff change, I was tasked with taking over all clients, another challenge for the program, I was on medical leave twice during this time.



Educational opportunities PEACE staff participated in online or via webinar:

1. Keeping Safe and Sane an Exploration of Vicarious Trauma Helping Professional: The cost of caring
2. Gratitude and Resiliency in the face of Traumatic Stories
3. Decolonization 101
4. BCSTH Annual Training Forum
    - Traditional Wellness
    - Preserving evidence
    - A Gendered Pandemic, A Just Recovery: COVID-19s Impact on Women, & How We Build Change Through Crisis
    - Inside Out: Gender Based Violence Prevention Education for Youth
    - Trauma & Resistance: 'Hang Time' & Other Innovative Responses to Oppression, Violence and Suffering
    - What Do You Meme? Teens and Tech
    - Providing Safer More Secure Private Services Online
    - Along with many interesting and thought-provoking Keynote speeches

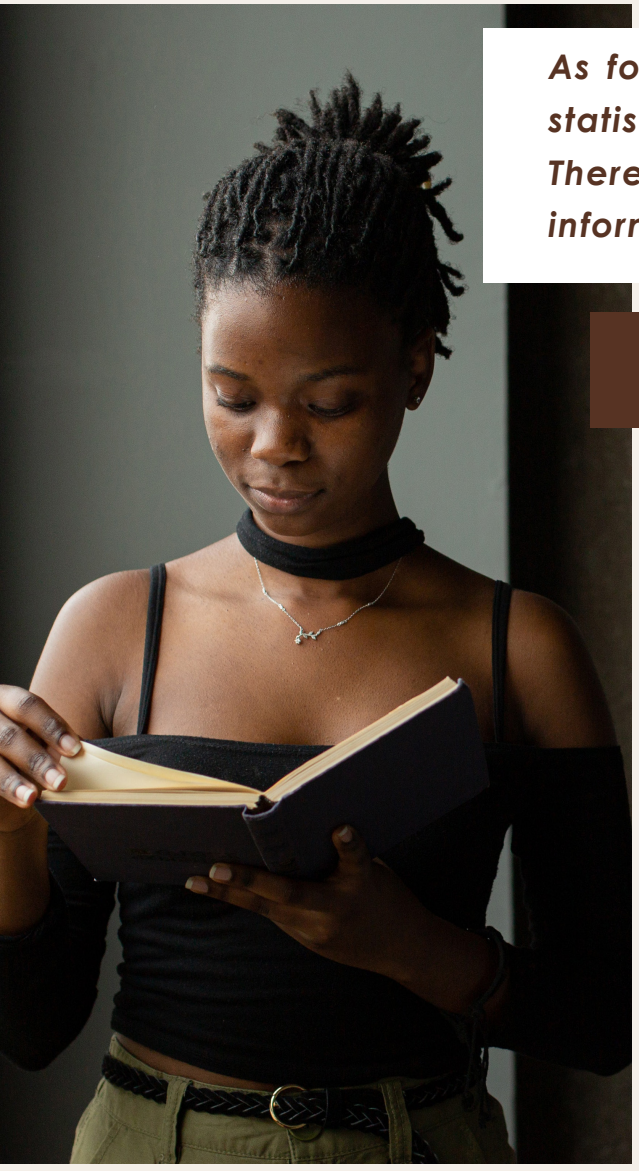


5. VIP: Cultural Safety and Building Relationships with our local Indigenous Communities

6. VIP: Tips and Strategies for Delivering VIP Curriculum

7. Many Regional and Provincial Zoom meetings to keep the PEACE community connected and informed, thank you BCSTH

8. COAST webinars and trainings



As for statistical information, part way through the year the way we had collected statistical information and passed this information along to the province changed. There were multiple webinars to assist with the new way of collecting and entering this information, the new system is called COAST.

Statistical Information

49 Families referred, resulting in 82 children/youth and 49 parents

88 Intakes into the program

448 1:1 child/youth sessions

50 Family sessions

169 Parent sessions

0 Due to COVID there were no groups

82 No shows/Cancellations

6 Crisis calls

0 Due to COVID, all 8 Violence Is Preventable Presentations were cancelled

During an average month the PEACE program works with
26 children/youth and 12 mothers

I believe it is important to note, that during this past year, staff and clients alike struggled through the changes at Ishtar, in Langley, our province and the world, and we did it together while staying apart.

Respectfully submitted,
Rena Andronek
PEACE program Coordinator





VIII. WOMEN SUPPORT SERVICES

Women's Support Services



During this fiscal year, the Women's Support Services (WSS) team consisted of Community Based Victim Services, Outreach and the Domestic Violence Liaison. Our team worked collaboratively to provide wrap around services to women and children within the Langley community. At the beginning of the fiscal year Mardel Donnelly coordinated WSS, but in May 2020 when the coordinators of the transition houses resigned, Mardel started to oversee both houses. When Janice Abbott became Executive Director, Mardel Donnelly became Manager of Admin Programs and her Coordinating position for WSS was not posted. Our team did not have a direct coordinator for the remainder of the fiscal year. Due to COVID-19 our team adjusted to working from home the majority of the time and having in-person appointments as needed when women did not have safe access to technology.

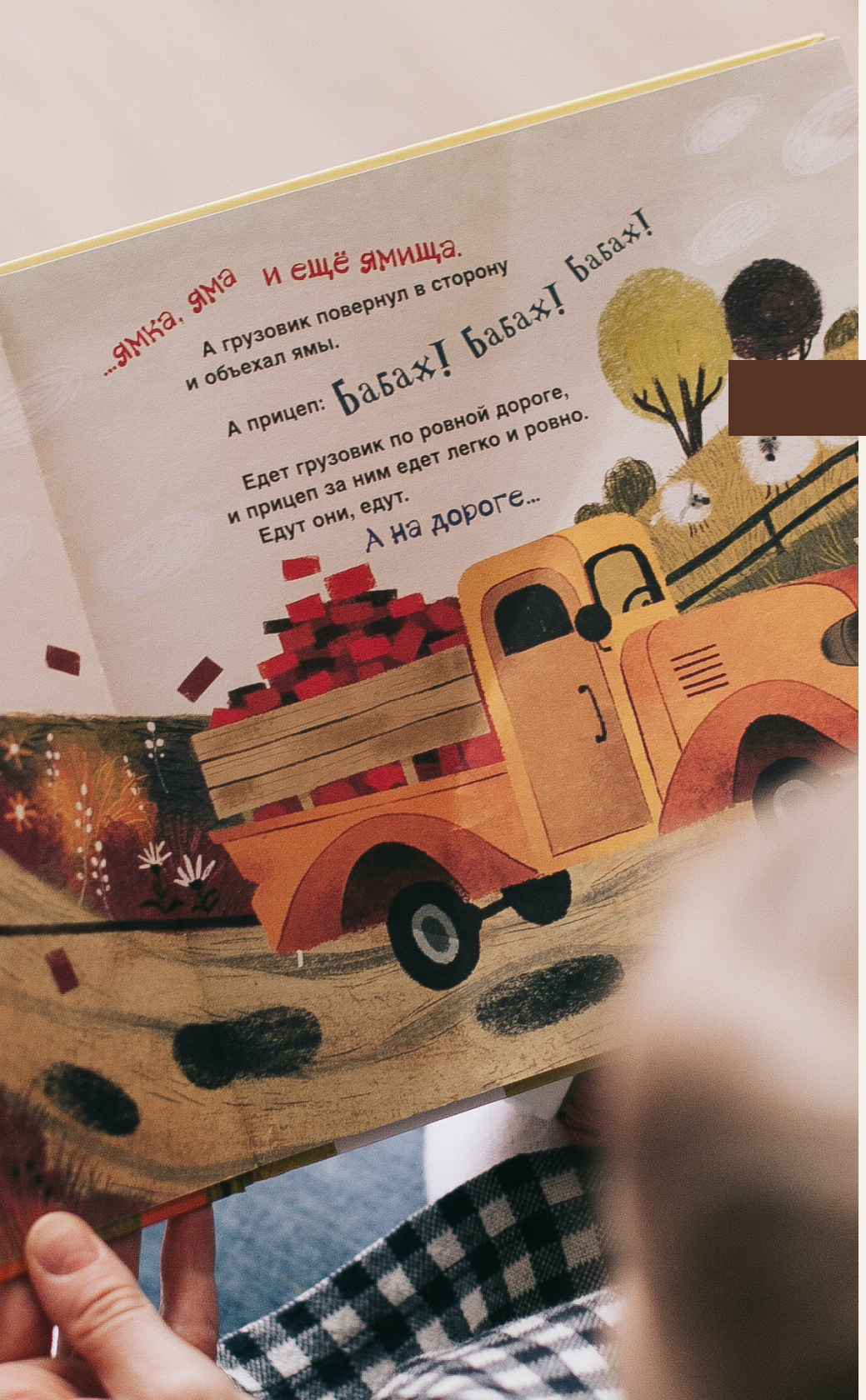


Community Based Victim Services Program (CBVS)

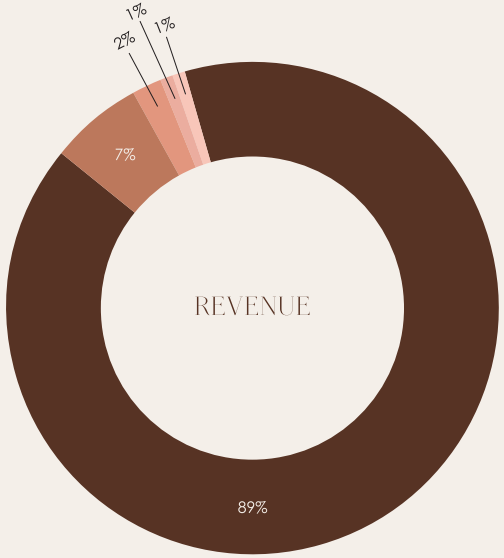
Community Based Victim Services had an empty full-time position when Mardel Donnelly moved to overseeing the transition houses in May 2020 and her position remained vacant until it was posted and filled by Arshbir Mann in October 2020. Job sharing between Rhonda Stobbe and Jen Pollon ended in August 2020. Rhonda Stobbe moved into a permanent part-time CBVS position and Jen Pollon moved into a permanent full-time CBVS position. As you will see in our stats, our CBVS program needs another position to be able to keep up with the demand for support and services in the Langley Community.

As we mention every year, CBVS had a substantial increase in the number of referrals we received. Our notable stats will show a large increase in referrals and services provided. We believe the increase was due to COVID-19 and women isolating at home with their abusive partners. During this time, our program continued to participate in our communities' monthly high-risk meeting with other community partners. We identify families that are at risk of heightened violence and collaborate to provide wrap around services.

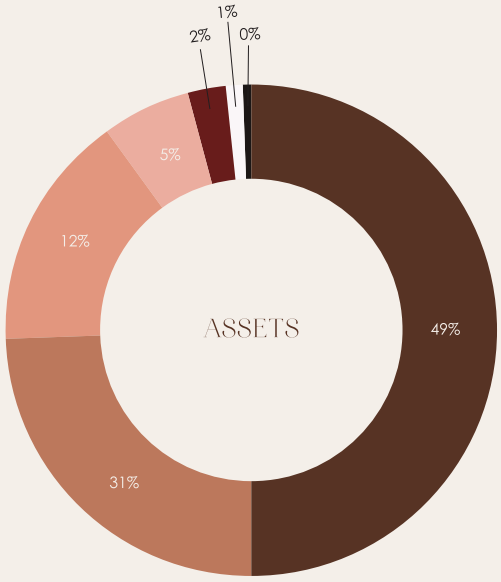
MONTHS	REFERRALS	CALLS, TEXT & EMAIL	APPOINTMENT	SAFETY PLANS	CVAP APPLICATIONS	OTHER CJS	INFO PACKAGE	COURT UPDATE	CRISIS INTER.
APRIL 2020	20	353	19	48	17	19	16	28	13
MAY 2020	22	333	18	33	14	35	18	37	13
JUNE 2020	31	419	33	24	18	38	14	45	7
JULY 2020	23	352	38	29	12	37	15	58	7
AUG 2020	30	428	29	18	23	46	12	54	6
SEPT 2020	28	481	39	42	17	58	14	90	13
OCT 2020	28	501	80	55	11	77	16	124	12
NOV 2020	35	550	83	52	8	69	19	103	12
DEC 2020	24	640	104	50	12	51	13	96	10
JAN 2021	25	626	85	40	26	100	9	93	10
FEB 2021	28	706	114	54	17	78	21	104	7
MARCH 2021	25	822	116	29	17	131	11	142	8
TOTAL	***319***	***6211***	***758***	***474***	***181***	***739***	***178***	***974***	***118***



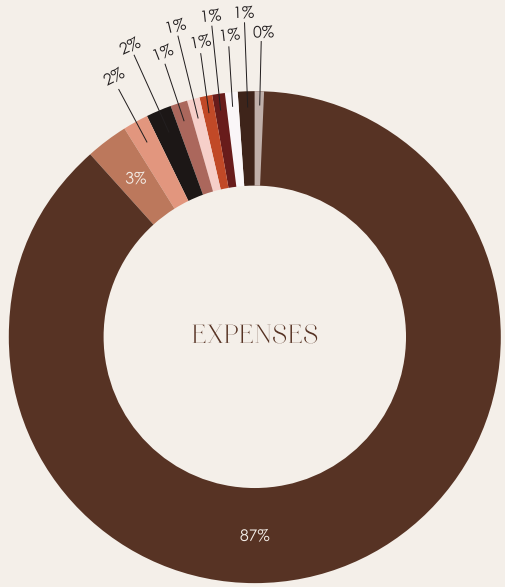
IX. FINANCIAL



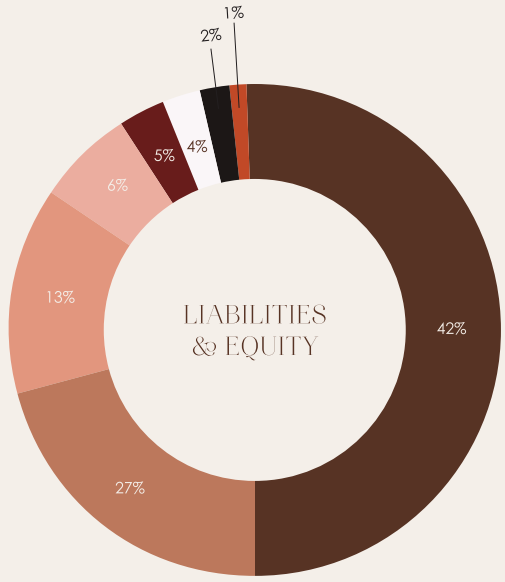
PROVINCE OF BC CONTRACTS	$2,004,195
DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING	$161,375
BC LOTTERIES COMMISSION	$50,000
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	$25,880
INTEREST & INVESTMENT INCOME	$14,122
TOTAL REVENUE:	***$2,255,573***



TOTAL CASH	$1,174,867
DUE FROM BC HOUSING	$727,000
TERM DEPOSITS	$273,719
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	$125,701
TOTAL CAPITAL ASSETS	$35,377
PREPAID EXPENSES	$31,915
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	$10,604



SALARIES & WAGES	$1,752,860
FACILITY EXPENSES	$69,618
PROGRAM SUPPLIES	$49,920
PROFESSIONAL FEES	$40,680
ASSET AMORTIZATION	$22,821
COMPUTER & OFFICE EXPENSES	$22,118
TRAVEL & VEHICLE EXPENSES	$18,802
TELEPHONE EXPENSES	$17,252
CLIENT SUPPORT	$12,264
PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION & STAFF TRAINING	$10,261
MISCELLANEOUS OPERATING EXPENSES	$9,317
TOTAL REVENUE:	***$2,025,913***



BUILDING & DEVELOPMENT FUND	$1,016,009
UNRESTRICTED FUND	$638,494
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS	$310,515
SUNLIFE LEGACY FUND	$124, 801
ADVANCE FUNDING	$122,722
ACCRUED WAGES PAYABLE	$86,324
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & ACCRUALS	$50,019
INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS	$30,299



X. DONORS

Thank you to our donors

i. BCHousing

BC HOUSING

ii. Ministry and Children and families | MCFD

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Children and Family Development

iii. Ministry of Public Service Solicitor General | MPSSG

iv. BCGaming

v. Donations



THANK YOU

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The faces of all women & children are not our actual clients. They will always remain anonymous