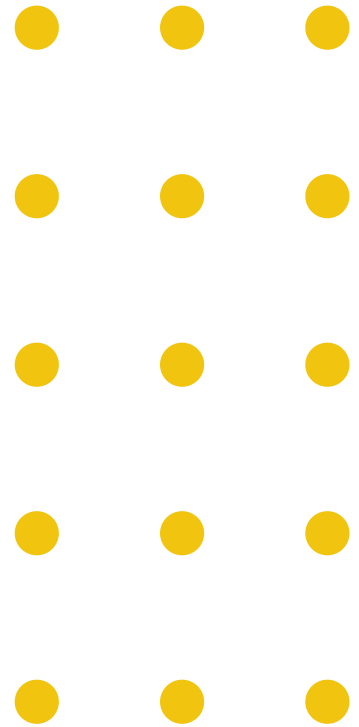




ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



604-534-1011



communityrelations
@ishtarsociety.org





We see you

We believe in you

You are not alone

Contents

I. Introduction & Organizational Identity

- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 Executive Leadership Change
- 3 Vision, Mission, Services, Values
- 4 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- 5 A Brief History of Ishtar

II. Programs & Services

- 6 Our Programs: A General Overview
- 7 Ishtar & Libra Transition Houses
- 9 Community Outreach Services
- 11 Community-Based Victim Services
- 13 Domestic Violence Liaison
- 15 STV Women's Counselling Program
- 17 PEACE Program for Children & Youth
- 19 Impact by the Numbers: 2024-2025
- 20 Then and Now

III. Impact & Storytelling

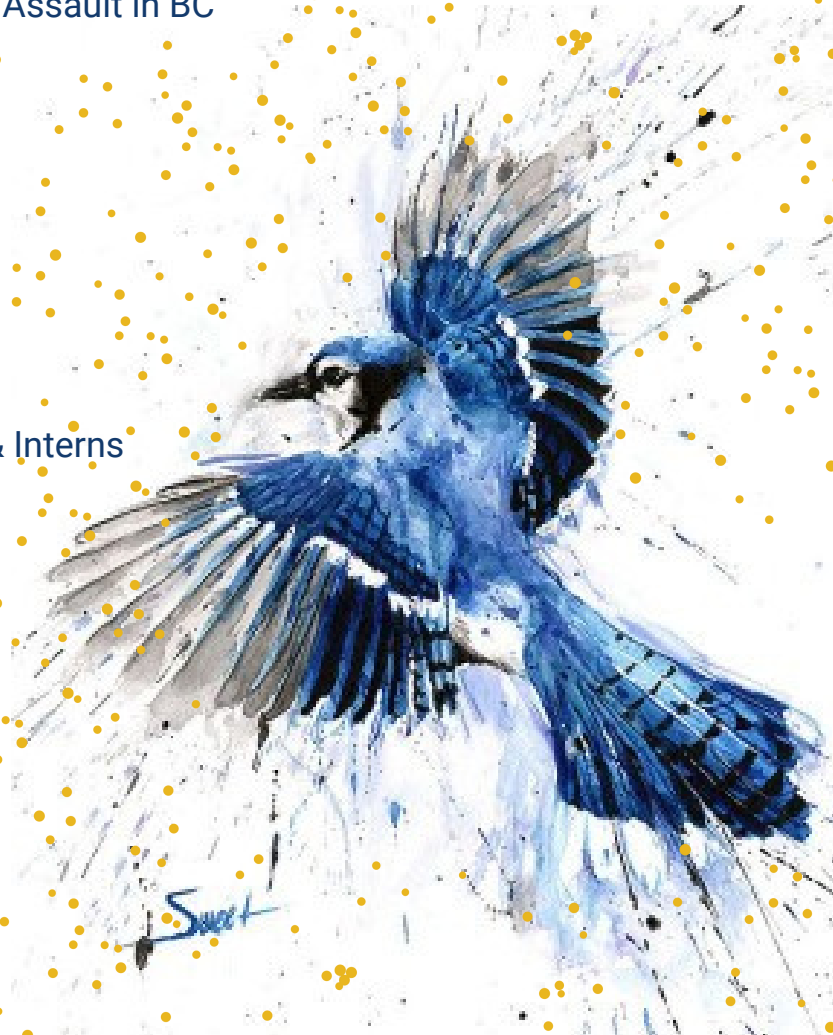
- 21 Intimate Partner Violence & Sexual Assault in BC
- 22 An Impactful Story
- 24 Featured Stories of Giving
- 28 Our Supporting Organizations

IV. Financials & Future

- 29 Financial Summary
- 31 Financial Statistics
- 32 Looking Ahead

V. Acknowledgements

- 33 Thank You to Our Dedicated Staff & Interns



Executive Summary

Message from the Board Chair

This year has brought exciting transitions for Ishtar Women's Resource Society.

After a yearlong search, we were pleased to welcome Julia Boyle Davidson as our new Executive Director. Her strong leadership and energy have already helped move several key initiatives forward.

We've also welcomed new board members who bring diverse expertise. Victoria Smith (Treasurer) and Hanh Gerry (Secretary) provide strong financial and administrative leadership. Additionally, Kirti Naslund offers legal insight, Diana Bryant brings deep experience in HR and nonprofits, Kiran Gill adds union relations knowledge, and Dawn-Marie Hugh brings a background in non-profit housing. Together, we're committed to supporting the Executive Director and upholding Ishtar's vision, mission, and values.

Ishtar's strength lies in its staff. Their professionalism, compassion, and resilience – especially through the extended leadership transition – have been incredible. We're proud of Ishtar's commitment to training and professional development, especially in emerging areas such as technology-facilitated abuse. As we look ahead, we're excited to collaborate on a new strategic plan that will shape the organization's next chapter.

The need for Ishtar's services is more urgent than ever. As stories of intimate partner violence continue to make headlines, our commitment to providing safety, support, and hope remains unwavering. We're grateful for the continued support from government partners and our generous community. Your contributions make a lasting impact on the lives of women and children who turn to Ishtar.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve as Board Chair and look forward to the year ahead as we continue this important work together.



Dawn-Marie Hugh
Board Chair

2024-2025 BOARD

Dawn-Marie Hugh,
Board Chair

Diana Bryant

Hahn Gerry

Kiran Kooner

Kirti Naslund

Malachi Cameron

Tia Dawson

Victoria Smith

Executive Leadership Change

Introducing Our New Executive Director

In January 2025, we excitedly welcomed Julia Boyle Davidson as the new Executive Director of Ishtar Women's Resource Society. With a wealth of experience in nonprofit leadership and a deep commitment to uplifting women and creating positive social change, Julia brings a fresh perspective and stability to Ishtar.

Julia came to us with over 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. Over the years, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership, strategic vision, and a relentless dedication to advancing causes that align with our values. In her previous role as Executive Director of AutismBC, Julia led a team of dedicated professionals striving to empower, support, and connect the autism community in British Columbia.

Julia's educational background includes a master's degree in International Development and Management from Lund University, Sweden, and a BA in psychology and First Nations studies from the University of British Columbia. Julia is driven by the belief that every woman and child deserves to live in safety, free from fear and violence. We are confident that under her guidance, Ishtar will continue to thrive and make a positive difference.

In just ten months since joining us in January 2025, our Executive Director has swiftly gained a deep understanding of our programs and projects, already making meaningful strides that strengthen our organization and enhance our capacity to serve the community. We are deeply grateful for her leadership, vision, and dedication, and we look forward to the continued growth and impact her guidance will bring in the years ahead.



Julia Boyle Davidson
Executive Director

MANAGEMENT

Julia Boyle Davidson,
Executive Director

Roshine Morrison,
Programs Manager

Pany Aghili,
Former Interim Executive Director

Vision

Feminist leaders working together locally to eliminate violence against women globally.

Mission

Ishtar advocates for, supports, and empowers women and their children who have been affected by abuse in all forms by providing safe housing, counselling, and education.

Values

In our everyday practice, we are held accountable by the values that connect us:

Integrity, Honesty, Trust, and Respect.

These values guide our relationship with each other and our work with women and children.



We gratefully acknowledge that our work takes place on the unceded, ancestral territories of the ǵícə́y (Katzie), ǵʷa:ńłə́h (Kwantlen), Máthxwi (Matsqui), and Se'mya'me (Semiahmoo) First Nations, who are part of the larger Stó:lō and Coast Salish peoples.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Our Team

We are proud to be a women-led organization that reflects a wide range of cultural and lived experiences. Our staff includes individuals from various ethnic backgrounds, and several identify as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This diversity strengthens our ability to serve our community with insight, empathy, and responsiveness.

Our Board

We are honoured to have strong leadership from our Indigenous Board Chair, whose guidance and perspective enrich our organization. Her guidance continues to shape our approach to reconciliation, Indigenous engagement, and culturally grounded service delivery. The board, as a whole, brings a variety of perspectives that reflect our values and the communities we serve.

In 2024-2025, our staff completed Indigenous Cultural Safety Training, fostering greater awareness of our colonial history, systemic barriers, and culturally safe practices in housing and support work.



A Brief History of Ishtar

Ishtar Women's Resource Society – known back then as Ishtar Transition House – was founded in 1973 in response to a growing and urgent need for safe, supportive spaces for women and children escaping intimate partner violence, family violence, and sexual assault. What began as a grassroots initiative by local advocates and community members has grown into a comprehensive organization providing critical support to hundreds of women and children each year.

In the early years, the organization operated a single transition home, offering temporary shelter to those in crisis. Recognizing the complex and long-term nature of trauma, the organization expanded its services to include a second transition home and developed an outreach department offering legal advocacy, housing support, safety planning, and community education.

Over time, the addition of trauma-informed counselling and psycho-education programming for both women and children became a cornerstone of the organization's holistic approach. Today,

Ishtar Women's Resource Society stands as a vital pillar of safety and hope in the community, committed to empowering survivors and breaking the cycle of abuse through compassionate care, advocacy, and education.



Pictured on the left is the first Ishtar House, and above is the earliest version of the Ishtar logo.

Our Programs: A General Overview

At Ishtar, we provide a continuum of support services that address the complex and intersecting needs of women, children, and gender-diverse people impacted by gender-based violence. Grounded in feminist principles, our programs are built to uphold safety, dignity, and self-determination at every stage of a survivor's journey.

We offer a range of trauma-informed services that reflect the diversity of those we serve – from emergency shelter and individual counselling to outreach support. Soon, we'll be expanding our continuum of care with the addition of second-stage housing. Whether someone is reaching out for the first time or reconnecting after years away, our services are designed to meet people where they are.

Our core programs include:

- **Transition Housing** at Ishtar and Libra Houses, offering safe, temporary refuge for women and children fleeing violence.
- **Community-Based Victim Services**, helping survivors navigate the criminal justice system and access legal, medical, and safety planning supports.
- **Stopping the Violence Counselling**, providing long-term, therapeutic support to women processing trauma.
- **PEACE Psycho-Education** for children and youth who have witnessed or experienced violence in their homes.
- **Domestic Violence Liaison**, creating bridges between survivors, police, and community agencies to increase safety and access to justice.
- **Community Outreach Services**, offering flexible, culturally responsive support to individuals in non-residential settings.

We recognize that each survivor's story is unique. That's why our staff – many of whom bring lived experience or deep roots in the communities we serve – work from a place of empathy, empowerment, and cultural humility.

Our services are offered at no cost, and we welcome individuals of all backgrounds, with a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppressive practice.

Together, these programs reflect our enduring commitment: to walk alongside survivors with empathy, respect, resilience, and hope – and to work toward a future free of violence.

Ishtar & Libra Transition Houses

Funded by BC Housing and community donations

Program Overview

Since 1973, Ishtar Transition House – and since 1993, Libra Transition House – have provided vital, confidential shelter and support to women and children fleeing violence in the Langley and Aldergrove regions. Operating 24/7, both houses offer trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and woman-centered services that prioritize safety, dignity, and healing.

In addition to immediate crisis intervention, the houses provide safety planning, emotional support, legal and systems advocacy, parenting support, and referrals to long-term resources. Libra House also accommodates pets, ensuring families are not forced to leave beloved animals behind in times of crisis.

Over the past year, staff expanded wellness-based programming – including gardening, group cooking, and arts-based workshops – and deepened practices to support Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, and disabled women through ongoing training and stronger community partnerships.

Challenges & Emerging Needs

Several key trends have shaped service delivery this year. Most significantly, the deepening housing crisis has led to longer, more complex stays, as women struggle to access safe, affordable housing. The rising costs of living, including food, rent, childcare, and transportation, have placed additional burdens on families rebuilding their lives.

The houses are also seeing an increase in complex mental health and substance use challenges, requiring greater coordination with external services. At the same time, the rise in technology-facilitated abuse (such as surveillance, app-based control, and online harassment) has introduced new safety concerns that require updated planning and tools.

We are working to meet the growing need for culturally safe, trauma-informed services for clients navigating intersecting forms of marginalization. These clients often require more time and advocacy to access legal supports, immigration services, or culturally appropriate care.



Impact & Outcomes

- **48 women and 56 children** received shelter and comprehensive support
- **4,318 crisis calls** were answered via the 24-hour support line and email
- Average lengths of stay were 62 days at Libra and 90 days at Ishtar, reflecting barriers to safe, affordable housing.
- **80% of Ishtar and 72% of Libra residents** transitioned into long-term housing

These outcomes demonstrate the power of extended support and thoughtful transition planning in helping families achieve stability after violence.

This work is especially critical given the well-documented reality that most women who leave abusive relationships return at least once. In British Columbia, the Ann Davis Transition Society estimates that women may cycle through this process an average of six to eight times before leaving permanently. These findings highlight just how essential long-term, trauma-informed support is to breaking the cycle of violence and building lasting safety.

Looking Ahead

To meet evolving needs, our Transition Houses have identified several priorities for the coming year. In the coming year, we aim to:

- Strengthen housing transition pathways through new and existing partnerships with housing providers.
- Advance trauma-informed and culturally responsive care, especially for underserved populations.
- Expand digital safety tools and practices to address the rising tide of tech-based abuse.
- Support staff wellness and prevent burnout through training and wellness initiatives.
- Continue advocacy and systems-level collaboration to address root causes, including poverty, housing insecurity, and legal access gaps.

Despite ongoing challenges, Ishtar and Libra Transition Houses remain critical lifelines for women and children navigating the aftermath of violence. Through compassion, collaboration, and a deep commitment to equity and care, the programs continue to help families rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

Community Outreach Services

Funded by BC Housing and community donations

Program Overview

The Outreach Program offers free, confidential support to women who are experiencing or have experienced abuse in relationships. Through a harm reduction model and an intersectional feminist approach, this program provides assistance with housing, form completion, advocacy, safety planning, and connection to community resources. Services are available to both residents and women in the broader community.

Our work centers on creating safety, stability, and empowerment through direct support and personalized care. Outreach staff meet women where they're at, helping to reduce barriers that often prevent access to services. Whether it's a one-time check-in or ongoing advocacy, this program provides a vital bridge to healing and long-term stability.

Challenges & Emerging Needs

Access to affordable, safe housing remains a persistent challenge, particularly for women with pets – especially large dogs – who face additional barriers in securing stable shelter. We also continue to see a rise in senior women facing housing insecurity due to financial strain.

Access to legal aid has become increasingly difficult, as fewer lawyers accept Legal Aid certificates. This leads to delays and limits women's ability to navigate family court matters safely and effectively. Reaching federal agencies remains frustratingly slow, often delaying benefits and support for women in crisis.

Despite these barriers, our team remains deeply committed to creative problem-solving and advocacy to get women the services they need.



Impacts & Outcomes

Key Outputs:

- 224 total referrals received
- 86 new client files opened
- 138 brief services provided
- 1,082 one-on-one appointments
- 21,615 calls, texts & emails responded to

Housing Support:

- 216 women/families housed
- 216 were still housed after 3 months
- 15 receiving housing subsidies

Legal & Court Support:

- 209 hours spent supporting clients in court
- 3,047 financial, legal, and employment resources provided to clients
- A UBC law student provided legal support in family and tenancy law.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, we aim to:

- Strengthen partnerships with housing providers to improve access to safe, pet-friendly, and affordable housing.
- Establish direct contact with Service Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency to streamline client support.
- Deepen collaboration with the Family Law Centre to enhance legal support.
- Provide ongoing training to strengthen staff skills in trauma-informed care, focusing on culturally safe and decolonizing approaches, digital safety, and coping with vicarious trauma to ensure all clients receive consistent, compassionate support.

Conclusion

Despite ongoing challenges, such as limited housing, reduced access to legal aid, and service delays, we've made key progress through expanded partnerships, legal support, and dedicated advocacy.

We remain focused on building a safer, more just community, where women and children have the tools, resources, and support to heal and thrive.

Community-Based Victim Services

Funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and community donations

Program Overview

The Community-Based Victim Services (CBVS) program provides trauma-informed, client-centered support to individuals impacted by power-based crimes, including sexual assault, criminal harassment, and intimate partner violence. Rooted in principles of safety, dignity, and empowerment, CBVS staff offer crisis intervention, safety planning, emotional support, advocacy, and assistance navigating the criminal justice system.

Working collaboratively with police, Crown Counsel, and community agencies, CBVS ensures that clients are supported, heard, and informed at every stage of their journey – whether pursuing justice or focusing on healing.

Throughout the year, services included:

- Accompaniment to police and court proceedings
- Referrals to counselling, shelter, and language supports
- Support with Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP) applications and Victim Safety Unit (VSU) registration
- Liaison work between clients, Crown Counsel, and RCMP

Challenges & Emerging Needs

This year revealed ongoing barriers that directly affect the safety, recovery, and justice outcomes for women and children escaping violence. Safe housing remains scarce, with a shortage of affordable and transitional housing forcing many women to make impossible choices – either remain in unsafe situations or relocate far from their support networks. Delays in critical services also emerged, as backlogs and lengthy processing times across key programs slowed access to safety measures, counselling, and victim support, leaving survivors without timely help.

The legal system posed additional challenges, with many clients facing lengthy, emotionally draining court proceedings. In some cases, outcomes such as peace bonds were issued instead of criminal charges, leaving survivors feeling unprotected. Gaps in communication between police and Crown Counsel further hindered survivors' ability to prepare for court.

Staff also encountered barriers to accessing legal information, as the lack of direct access to provincial court databases required them to spend significant time chasing case updates; time that could otherwise be spent on safety planning and direct support. These systemic gaps highlight the urgent need for stronger inter-agency coordination and improved access to legal information for community-based frontline workers.

Key Outputs, Impacts & Outcomes

- 195 referrals received, with 182 clients engaged in personalized support
- 3,978 contacts responded to by phone, text, and email – reflecting sustained demand for crisis response, emotional care, and practical information
- 214 Crime Victim Assistant Program applications submitted with clients to access financial and therapeutic supports
- 640 court file updates provided to reduce legal system confusion and support informed decision-making
- 70 hours of in-person court accompaniment ensured clients were not alone during stressful legal proceedings

These outputs reflect a deeper, ongoing impact of increased client understanding of justice processes, improved emotional well-being, and greater confidence in decision-making during times of crisis.

Looking Ahead

We are acting on the lessons of the past year to strengthen safety, support, and justice for survivors. To create more housing options, we're expanding partnerships with landlords, housing providers, and community groups to increase access to safe, affordable spaces for women and children. We're also working to reduce wait times for support by strengthening coordination with government agencies and other service providers, advocating for faster processing so survivors can access counselling and safety measures without delay.

In the area of legal support, we're building stronger communication channels with police and Crown Counsel, and pushing for better access to legal information systems to keep clients safe and well-informed.

Beyond direct service improvements, we're focused on system-level change. Using insights from our frontline work, we continue to advocate for policies and funding that address the root causes of these barriers – ensuring more sustainable and equitable outcomes for all survivors.

Conclusion

CBVS continues to stand as a critical support for victims of crime. Despite systemic barriers, our team remains focused on delivering services that prioritize client safety, healing, and justice. We remain committed to working with partners and communities to meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

Domestic Violence Liaison Program

Funded by the Ministry of Children & Family Development and community donations

Program Overview

The Domestic Violence Liaison (DVL) Program supports women and families navigating the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) system while experiencing domestic violence. Grounded in trauma-informed and client-centered principles, the DVL program provides a bridge between women, MCFD, and key support systems – offering education, advocacy, safety planning, and emotional support.

Women accessing the program received in-person and virtual support tailored to their needs, including:

- Safety planning and risk assessments
- Education on the dynamics of abuse and healthy boundaries
- Referrals to community and internal resources, including transition houses, daycares, Baby Go-Round, Shelter Movers, and Ishtar's internal programs (STV Counselling, PEACE, CBVS, Outreach)

These supports equip women with the tools, confidence, and connections needed to move forward in safety and with dignity.

Challenges & Emerging Needs

Over the past year, collaboration between the Domestic Violence Liaison (DVL) program and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has deepened. The regular presence of the DVL worker at the MCFD office, along with increased participation in home visits and safety planning meetings through Family and Community Programs Services (FCPS), has significantly improved communication and led to more coordinated, responsive support for families experiencing violence.

At the same time, housing instability continues to pose a major barrier to safety and recovery in Langley. The lack of affordable and transitional housing options forces many women to delay leaving abusive relationships or relocate to unfamiliar communities, often cutting them off from essential supports and increasing their isolation. This persistent shortage remains one of the most serious threats to long-term safety, stability, and healing for survivors and their children.

Impacts & Outcomes

- 61 referrals received over the fiscal year, with contact attempted for every client referred
- 52 individuals actively engaged in Domestic Violence Liaison (DVL) services
- 1,530 contacts responded to via phone, text, and email – highlighting the ongoing demand for support, safety planning, and system navigation
- Overall, the program exceeded service goals by 8%, supporting more individuals and families than projected.
- Women reported increased confidence in protecting their families and navigating complex systems.
- Safety planning and one-on-one sessions helped clarify personal goals and recognize abusive patterns.
- Improved understanding of MCFD processes, supported by DVL education and advocacy
- Increased demand for in-person appointments indicated a preference for consistent, face-to-face support.
- Client progress reports were implemented to better track engagement and provide timely updates to MCFD, enabling more targeted interventions.

Conclusion

Each client file – regardless of whether the individual chose to engage – involved meaningful effort and coordination, underscoring the program’s deep commitment to safety and holistic support. Throughout both reporting periods, women consistently demonstrated greater proactivity in seeking support for themselves and their children. Group and individual sessions offered a space to process trauma, build awareness, and develop practical strategies for long-term resilience and independence. These outcomes not only reflect the growing need in our community but also highlight the program team’s dedication and responsiveness.

Looking Ahead

The DVL program remains committed to providing compassionate, comprehensive care to families impacted by domestic violence. With improved coordination and adequate resourcing, we aim to deepen our impact and ensure every woman has the support she needs to move forward safely.

STV Women's Counselling Program

Funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and community donations

Program Overview

The Stopping the Violence (STV) counselling program offers trauma-informed, long-term, and crisis support to women impacted by intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and childhood abuse. These experiences affect every aspect of a survivor's life, and STV supports women in reclaiming their sense of safety, emotional regulation, connection, and self-agency through individual and group therapy. Services are delivered at no cost by a team of highly trained counsellors, helping bridge critical service gaps in the community.

Program Expansion:

Two new group programs were launched:

- Healing After Neglect: Helps women impacted by childhood neglect build skills in self-care, emotional awareness, and boundaries.
- Trauma and the Body: A drop-in group offering somatic practices (breathwork, bodywork, yoga) to support nervous system regulation.

Emerging Trends

STV continues to observe several emerging trends shaping service delivery. Demand for after-hours support is increasing, particularly among women facing financial strain who are unable to access services during regular business hours. In response, STV has expanded evening availability to improve access. Additionally, there has been a noticeable rise in referrals originating from within the same families or close social circles. While this reflects strong word-of-mouth trust, it also raises concerns around privacy and client autonomy. Staff are seeking training in systemic approaches to better navigate these dynamics. Referrals are also increasingly reflective of the community's cultural and linguistic diversity. Although some staff are able to provide multilingual support, additional resources are needed to adequately meet the growing demand for culturally responsive services.

Challenges

The organization continues to face staffing and capacity challenges. The conclusion of short-term funding led to extended wait times of 8 to 10 months for some services. Support from clinical counselling interns this year helped to ease delays, but overall capacity remains constrained. Another significant challenge is the complexity of client needs. Many individuals present with intersecting concerns, including trauma, mental health challenges, and substance use. This has highlighted the importance of thoughtful triage and coordinated referral pathways to ensure clients receive the most appropriate care.

Impacts & Outcomes

Key Service Highlights:

- 1825 individual counselling sessions
- 64 group sessions
- 211 new clients served
- 2934 additional phone/email contacts

Internship Program Success:

Five Master's-level counselling interns significantly boosted service capacity:

- 74 clients removed from the long-term waitlist
- 64 co-facilitated group sessions
- 789 individual sessions delivered

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, STV will focus on several key priorities. New programming will support women transitioning into long-term housing, with group-based therapy designed to promote stability and healing. We're also looking to strengthen our partnerships with local agencies to improve referral pathways and share resources more effectively. Reducing wait times remains a priority, with plans to continue offering urgent-care triage, short-term crisis sessions, and more drop-in group options to meet immediate needs.

Conclusion

The STV program remains a vital resource for women survivors of violence in our community. Through its commitment to accessible, trauma-informed care and responsive service delivery, STV continues to empower women on their healing journeys. With continued investment in staff, partnerships, and low-barrier programming, the program is well-positioned to meet emerging needs while maintaining its high standard of care.

PEACE Program for Children & Youth

Funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and community donations

Program Overview

The PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment) Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence began in 1992 to provide psycho-educational counselling for children exposed to violence at home. Ishtar's PEACE Program serves Langley, working with children, youth, and non-offending parents through school-based counselling, group support, and summer camps.

The program's goals include:

- Creating safe, respectful, and empowering spaces for children and families
- Supporting emotional healing, healthy coping, and safety planning
- Teaching non-violent conflict resolution and emotional literacy
- Fostering hope, resilience, and self-esteem
- Reducing isolation and encouraging healthy connections
- Promoting awareness of gender-based violence and prevention

The PEACE team also delivers school outreach and the VIP (Violence Is Preventable) program, helping students understand and address the impacts of domestic violence.

Emerging Needs

There's been a rise in referrals for children with neurodivergent support needs and complex trauma responses, reflecting province-wide trends. More self-referrals suggest strong community trust in Ishtar's work. However, service demand continues to outpace funding, leading to longer waitlists.

Challenges

Court advocacy now makes up a growing part of staff responsibilities. While this work is impactful, it also contributes to an increased workload. Ongoing funding limitations continue to make it challenging to expand services in a way that keeps pace with community needs.

Positive Developments:

- Partnered with BC Lions' Be More Than a Bystander campaign at HD Stafford
- Hosted VIP presentations in 11 classrooms across two schools
- Collaborated on the new Child & Youth Advocacy Centre in Langley
- Engaged with LIFT meetings to support at-risk families
- Honoured by Aldergrove Community Secondary School students through the Youth Philanthropy Initiative, including a fundraising bake sale
- Partnered with Willows Bible Camp and continued support from Augustino Duminuco's Toy Drive and the Infinite Expansion Foundation



Services Provided:

- 137 referrals received
- 78 clients served
- 818 sessions with child/youth, 94 sessions with caregivers, 21 sessions with families
- 23 children/youths and 8 caregivers served in group sessions
- 61 safety plans formulated
- 406 hours spent on session preparation and documentation
- 10 school partnerships

Acknowledgements:

This year, PEACE received invaluable support from students and volunteers, including a Hika Capstone project student and two fantastic peer mentors from our community.

Key Highlights

School Partnerships

PEACE staff offer one-on-one sessions and VIP presentations in local schools, thanks to the ongoing collaboration with school staff. Participating schools include: Langley Christian, Simonds Elementary, Parkside, Shortreed, RE Mountain, HD Stafford, Peter Ewart, Betty Gilbert, Alex Hope, Wix Brown, and others.

Horse Camp at Pacific Riding for Developing Abilities

A summer highlight, Horse Camp promotes confidence and healing through equine therapy. Eight children and two peer assistants (Scarlett and Phaedra) participated this year. The week included trail rides, games, and a family picnic showcasing skills learned.

Family Fun Day Camps

Two family-focused events were hosted – one at Science World and another at Otter Co-op Outdoor Experience. These camps offer families time to bond, learn, and enjoy activities together.

Themed Summer Day Camps

Four camps focused on Feelings, Cooperation, Friendships, and Personal Power. Mornings included group learning; afternoons featured crafts and outdoor play, like a city scavenger hunt.

Impact by the Numbers:

2024-2025

Total # Clients
Served
698

Total # Client
Appointments
4,169

Women & Children
Sheltered
104

Total # Crisis calls /
texts / emails
received by
programs altogether
34,375

Children/Youth
Served through
PEACE
125

Hours
Supporting
Clients in Court
279

Successes
transferring
women / families
to long-term
housing
216

Then and Now: How the Language of Family Law Has Evolved and Why the Work Isn't Over

Then (1970s–80s)

"Custody" and "access" ●●●●●●●●●●▶

No legal definition of family violence ●●●●●▶

Restraining orders via the Criminal Code only ●▶

Family violence is often overlooked in parenting decisions ●●●●▶

One-size-fits-all orders ●●●●●●●●●●▶

Now (2013–2025)

"Parenting responsibilities" and "parenting time"

Clear, inclusive definition (emotional, financial, etc.)

Family Law Act-specific protection orders

Mandatory consideration in all child-related matters

Flexible, tailored remedies for safety and stability

Key fact:

Women are 13 times more likely to be assaulted by an intimate partner than by a stranger.

In 2021, two-thirds (66%) of female homicides were committed by an intimate partner (Statistics Canada). This stark reality underscores the urgent need for continued focus on preventing intimate partner violence through targeted interventions and support services that protect survivors and hold perpetrators accountable.

What is Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)?

Intimate Partner Violence is a pattern of behavior used to establish power and control over an intimate partner through fear and intimidation, often including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse. IPV is not only a personal issue but a significant public health and human rights concern.

IPV affects people of all backgrounds, but it disproportionately impacts women and gender-diverse individuals. Nearly 44% of women in Canada have experienced some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime (Statistics Canada), making it one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based violence.

Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault in BC

Intimate partner violence is a pervasive and deeply rooted issue — one that crosses all boundaries of age, culture, and socioeconomic status. It often remains hidden, silenced by fear, shame, and stigma.

Its impacts are lasting, reaching far beyond physical harm. Survivors may face emotional trauma, financial instability, isolation, and a loss of trust that touches every part of their lives.

At its core, this violence is about power and control. Addressing it requires not only safety and support for survivors, but also a collective commitment to change – to believe, to stand with, and to work toward a future free from violence.

Nearly half (48%) of women over the age of 15 in BC have experienced intimate partner violence.*

In BC, **more than ⅓ (37%) of women over the age of 15** have been sexually assaulted.*

And yet most survivors never access the legal system.

- **80%** of intimate partner violence is not reported to the police.*
- **94%** of sexual assaults are not reported to the police.*

*From Independent Systemic Review of BC's Legal System Response to Sexual Violence & Intimate Partner Violence, Final Report (Dr. Kim Stanton) — documents page.



An Impactful Story

Rescued Together: A Family's Path Out of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can leave deep scars, but it can also reveal extraordinary strength – especially in a parent fighting to protect their children. In the story that follows, shared by our Domestic Violence Liaison, we meet a courageous mother who found the strength to escape an abusive relationship and build a safer future for her family.

Names and identifying details have been changed to protect their privacy.

When Olivia was first connected to our program, she had just left an abusive relationship and was in urgent need of a safe space for herself and her young children. As a young mother with little support, Olivia was navigating a deeply vulnerable period in her life. She came from a highly traditional family background, which she described as strict and misaligned with her own values. Having witnessed domestic violence in her childhood – particularly the abuse her mother endured – Olivia had grown up with a normalized view of unhealthy relationships, which made it difficult to recognize the warning signs in her own situation.

After years in an abusive relationship, Olivia eventually recognized the danger she and her children were in and made the courageous decision to seek help. One of the first steps in her journey was securing safe housing. With support from the DVL program, Olivia was assisted in accessing Ishtar Transition House, where she could begin her path toward healing in a safe and supportive environment. She was unfamiliar with the process and felt overwhelmed during the intake, but with gentle guidance and encouragement from our staff, she successfully completed it and moved in.

To further support her through the legal and emotional aftermath of leaving an abusive relationship, Olivia was referred to Community-Based Victim Services (CBVS). Through Ishtar's CBVS, she received vital assistance navigating the criminal court system and support with her application to the Crime Victims Assistance Program for counselling funding for herself and her children. This connection ensured Olivia had advocacy and guidance during a time when the justice system felt complex and intimidating.

In addition, Olivia was referred to Outreach Services, which provided her with practical support around housing, financial resources, and navigating the family court system. This multi-layered support network played a crucial role in helping Olivia begin to rebuild her life and find stability for herself and her children.

Once Olivia had settled into the transition house, she was ready to begin her healing journey. From that point forward, she was highly engaged and proactive. We began meeting weekly to work through the DVL program's educational modules on safety planning, understanding abuse, and self-care, etc.

These sessions included reflective exercises and real-life examples, helping Olivia better understand her experiences and recognize patterns in her past relationship. She began identifying red flags she had previously overlooked, such as manipulation and financial control. One example she shared was

how her partner would repeatedly borrow money under the guise of paying her back – something that eventually became a harmful pattern of dependency and control. She began identifying red flags she had previously overlooked, such as manipulation and financial control.

Throughout each session, Olivia was committed to learning and healing. She consistently attended appointments, participated actively, and applied coping strategies to manage stress and maintain emotional stability. She worked hard to set and clarify her personal goals, created a detailed action plan, and monitored her own progress. Her motivation and determination led to meaningful change.

In time, Olivia transitioned out of Ishtar Transition House and moved into second-stage housing. She found a nearby school for her children, allowing her to balance parenting with her own work and school commitments. Olivia's ability to juggle her responsibilities while staying focused on her goals reflects her resilience and drive.

Today, Olivia is thriving. Her journey is a testament to the power of trauma-informed support, community collaboration, and personal strength. She has built a new life for herself and her children, rooted in safety, stability, and hope for the future. Olivia often reflects on how each support service she accessed - ranging from the DVL program to the transition house, victim services and outreach - played a significant role in her success.

Olivia's story is a powerful reminder that, while we cannot always control our past, we do have the power to shape our future. Her courage and determination prove that healing is possible – and that with the right support, anything is achievable. This family's story is a powerful reminder that support, safety, and healing are possible – even after unimaginable hardship. For survivors of domestic violence, the journey forward can begin with just one safe connection. We honour this mother's bravery and the strength of her children, and we remain committed to helping families find hope, protection, and a path to a better future.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, help is available:

 Visit VictimLinkBC.ca or

 Call/text 1-800-563-0808

 Email VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca

There are over 600 shelters across Canada that are more than ready to support you or answer any questions you have.

For women and children seeking shelter, please visit sheltersafe.ca lists.

You can also call Ishtar Transition House 24/7 at [604-530-9442](tel:604-530-9442) or Libra Transition House at [604-857-5797](tel:604-857-5797).

If you are in immediate danger call [911](tel:911).

To support our work and help more women and families find safety, consider donating at ishtarsociety.org/how-to-give/

We see you. We believe in you. You are not alone.

Featured Stories of Giving

Honouring Our Leading Donors

As we reflect on the incredible support we've received this past year, we are proud to recognize the generosity of our leading donors. Their contributions have had a profound impact on our ability to deliver critical services and expand our reach to those who need us most. We extend our sincere thanks to the following top monetary donors:

- **Fred & Judy DeVries Foundation** – \$80,000
- **The Langley Foundation** – \$15,000
- **Reflection Development** – \$9,425
- **Royal LePage Shelter Foundation** – \$8,326.50
- **BC Public Service Employees** – \$2,275

Each of these gifts has directly supported our programming, emergency shelter services, and community outreach initiatives.

We are also especially grateful to **Costco RTV, Langley**, our top in-kind donor, whose generous contributions of food, household goods, and other essential items – valued at approximately \$15,000 – have made a tangible difference in the lives of the women and families we serve. These items are used directly in our transition houses, offered as gifts to clients during their stay, and included in our starter home packages for those moving into safe, independent housing. This meaningful support helps ensure that our clients feel cared for, respected, and empowered as they take brave steps toward a new beginning.

These contributions represent more than financial support. They are a testament to a shared commitment to uplifting women and families impacted by violence. We are deeply appreciative and inspired by your belief in our mission.



Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health: Giving Shelter Campaign



Our gratitude also goes to these local **Shoppers Drug Mart** stores, who chose to support us for this campaign:

- Murrayville Square
- Langley Crossing
- Brookwood Mall
- 208th and 80th Ave
- Thunderbird Village
- Aldergrove Village (pic)

Many thanks to all who donated to the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health Initiative to help women and their children escape domestic violence.
Your generosity helped raise \$13,610!



**Giving
Shelter**

**SHOPPERS
FOUNDATION
FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH**



Grateful for Rack Fashion's Ongoing Support

We are incredibly thankful to **Rack Fashions** for their continued generosity in donating beautiful, new women's clothing. Their periodic contributions ensure that those in need have access to stylish, high-quality garments, boosting confidence and offering a sense of dignity. This ongoing support plays a crucial role in helping individuals feel valued and empowered.

During the fiscal year 2024-2025, we received many boxes of beautiful women's clothing from Rack Fashion, offering a wide range of sizes from XS to XXXL, ensuring that women of all body types can find something that makes them feel confident and cared for. From stylish essentials to unique boutique pieces, these donations bring dignity and joy to the women we serve. With a value of \$9,788.15, this donation reflects not just generosity but a deep commitment to helping women feel seen, supported, and stylish.

The boutique, which specializes in fashion for women over 40, has been a consistent and valued supporter of our mission. Twice per year, we receive another wave of generous donations, thanks to the kindness and commitment of Cheryl Anderson, who has made it a personal mission to help women thrive beyond the closet.

To Cheryl and the entire team behind Rack Fashions: thank you for your ongoing support and generosity. Your contributions are more than clothing – they are confidence, choice, and a tangible expression of care. We are proud to partner with such a compassionate and generous retailer.



A Heartfelt Thank You to Langley Quilters' Guild



We are incredibly grateful to the **Langley Quilters Guild** for their ongoing generosity and support. These quilts are more than just handcrafted pieces – they are symbols of warmth, care, and community. The Quilters Guild's thoughtful contributions regularly received – a dozen or more at a time – brighten the lives of those we serve, and we are deeply thankful for their kindness. Their dedication to giving back through these beautiful gifts truly makes a difference.

At Ishtar Resource Society, we believe in the power of community, and recently, we were reminded just how beautiful that connection can be. We found ourselves in need of a special gift for a child in our PEACE counselling program. We were hoping for a pretty pink quilt that could bring comfort and warmth to a young heart. Without hesitation, we reached out to our local Quilters Guild, knowing we have their avid support.

We called Kathy, our main guild's member contact, and shared our request. "We need a special quilt for a young girl, and it has to be pink!" Kathy was delighted to hear from us and eager to help. Unfortunately, she wasn't able to drop by herself, but her wonderful husband, Jack, didn't miss a beat. He happily took on the task and delivered not one, not two, but 13 lovely quilted blankets to our office!

Each quilt is a beautiful work of art, stitched with care and full of love. We're so grateful for Kathy, Jack, and the entire Quilters Guild for their generosity and support. Thanks to their kindness, we can bring comfort not only to one child but to many, spreading warmth and love throughout our community.

A huge thank you to Kathy, Jack, and everyone involved for making a difference in the lives of those we serve. We're so grateful for this amazing act of kindness and the beautiful quilts that will help make our clients feel cherished and cared for.

This is just one more example of how, together, we can create a stronger, more compassionate community.

With Deep Appreciation:

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Supporting Organizations

- 0821345 BC LTD, Check N Loans
- Aldergrove Secondary School YPI Fundraising Group
- Amazon, Inc-Grants
- CanadaHelps
- Costco Wholesale Canada Ltd
- David & Sandra Wallace
- Dr. Fatemeh Basij Inc. DBA Allard Dental Centre
- Fort Langley Lions Club
- Fred & Judy DeVries Foundation
- Gateway Casinos & Entertainment Limited - Head Office
- Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce
- GYBO - Get Your Books Outsourced
- Ladies Aux to RCL #265 General Account
- Langley Good Times Cruise-In Society
- Langley Presbyterian Church
- Longboard Architectural Products Inc.
- Meme Brooks Design Inc
- OK Tire Stores
- Panorama Wellness Group Inc.
- Poppy Estate Ladies Golf Club
- Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
- Rona Foundation
- Royal LePage Shelter
- SCR Golf Group
- Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health
- SPINCO CLOVERDALE
- St Oswalds Ladies Guild
- Surrey Ladies Golf Club
- The Huntsfield Green Social Club
- The Langley Foundation
- Township of Langley Professional Firefighters Local 4550 Charitable
- United Churches of Langley Women
- Vintage Feminist
- Wellden Fitness Inc

And to the many other businesses, community partners & individual donors who have and continue to support our work!



Financial Summary

Message from the Treasurer

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Ishtar Women's Resource Society for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

I'm proud to share that Ishtar has achieved its third consecutive annual surplus, closing the year with an excess of \$193,019. This follows surpluses of \$396,719 in FY2024 and \$458,292 in FY2023, reflecting our organization's ongoing commitment to sound financial stewardship, strategic resource allocation, and long-term sustainability.

Our total revenue for the year was \$3,297,837, representing a 9% decrease from the prior year. This decline is primarily due to the non-renewal of several one-time federal, provincial, and community grants received in previous years. However, our core operational funding remains strong, with the majority of our revenue continuing to come from the Province of British Columbia.

In response to the reduced revenue, we took proactive steps to manage expenditures, resulting in a 4% decrease in expenses, which totaled \$3,104,818 for the year. This responsible approach allowed us to maintain a healthy surplus without compromising the quality or reach of our programs.

As a result of our overall prudent financial management, our cash and short-term investments increased to \$2,413,824 – an 11% increase over the prior year. This growth reflects a combination of factors, including operating surpluses, thoughtful fund allocation, and strategic moves such as investing in Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GICs) and mutual funds to benefit from higher interest rates.



Victoria Smith, CPA
Board Treasurer

These funds are critical in ensuring Ishtar's ability to withstand economic uncertainty, while also enabling us to invest in long-term strategic priorities and enhance the impact of our programs.

We are deeply grateful to our core funders, whose continued support makes our work possible:

- BC Housing for funding Ishtar and Libra Transition Houses and our Outreach Program;
- The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG) for supporting our Stopping the Violence Counselling Program, PEACE Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence, and our Domestic Violence Liaison Program;
- The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) for funding our Domestic Violence Liaison Program.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous community donors, many of whom give without being asked. Your quiet generosity strengthens our community and allows us to go further in supporting those who rely on our services.

Lastly, I want to thank Ishtar's leadership team and staff for their diligence and care throughout the year. We remain committed to transparency, accountability, and the responsible stewardship of every dollar entrusted to us, ensuring that Ishtar continues to be a resilient and trusted support for women, children, and families in our community.

You can make a difference by:

♥ **Donating** – Your financial support provides shelter, crisis response, and ongoing care for survivors.

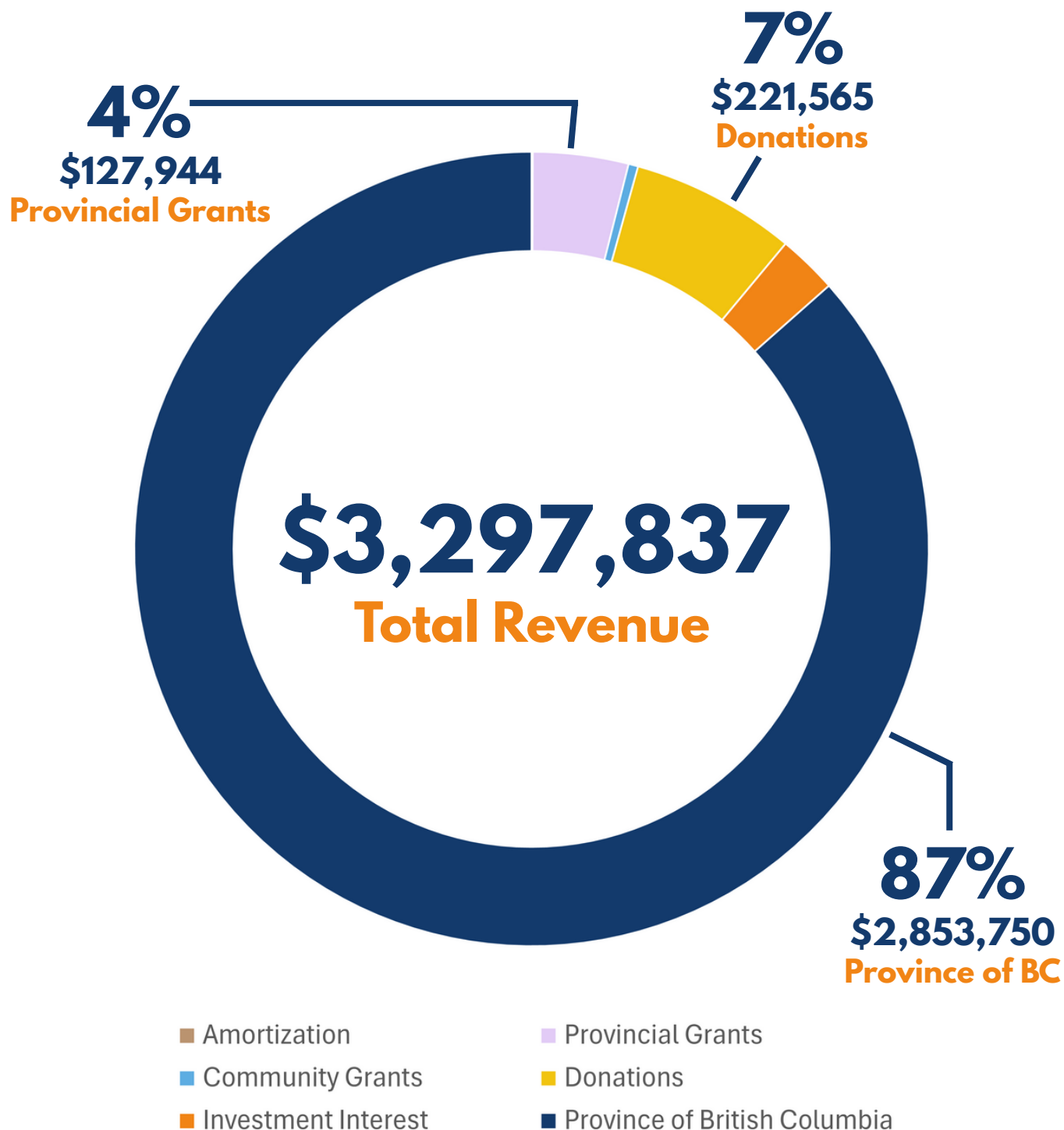
🔗 **Sharing our message** – Follow and amplify our social media to raise awareness about gender-based violence.

🤝 **Partnering with us** – Community collaboration helps us strengthen our programs and extend our reach.

Visit www.ishtarsociety.org to learn more or make a secure donation.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we are building change.

Financial Statistics



Looking Ahead

Operational Highlight: Second-stage Housing

Ishtar is excited to be launching a Second Stage Housing facility in Langley in 2025/2026, in partnership with BC Housing. Our Second Stage Housing Program will offer 33 temporary residences to women and their children who have experienced intimate partner violence and are rebuilding their lives. This milestone marks a crucial step forward in providing comprehensive support for women by equipping them with the tools they need to rebuild their lives and regain stability and financial independence.

With our Transition Houses targeting stays of only 30 days, our Second Stage Program offers stays of up to 18 months to give women the time they need to secure long-term housing, employment, or return to school for better career opportunities. It also permits women time to access legal support and community resources, which are vital to recovery. With the opening of our Second Stage Housing Program, Ishtar extends its commitment to providing holistic support, specifically focusing on helping women transition from crisis to stability through independent living.

Ishtar has always relied on the generosity and support of the community to provide the comprehensive services it offers, and the need for community support remains strong. Although Ishtar's programs are funded by the Province of BC, the base funding provided is not adequate. Ishtar relies on fundraising and donations to offer its comprehensive support services. The financial backing of individuals, businesses, and philanthropic organizations is essential to sustain and strengthen Ishtar's impact. This support directly translates to counselling hours, one-to-one support hours, life skills workshops, and children's programming.

Your support is integral to the success of Ishtar's programs, especially our Second Stage Housing Program. By investing in this initiative, you contribute to creating a safe and empowering space where women can rebuild their lives, regain their independence, and break free from the chains of abuse. Your financial assistance will directly impact the lives of women and children seeking a fresh start. Your support is a vital investment in the well-being and empowerment of survivors of domestic violence. By contributing to Ishtar, you become an agent of change, helping to break the cycle of violence and shape a future where women and children can thrive free from fear.

We would be grateful for your support of our new Second-Stage Housing Program.

Thank You to Our Dedicated Staff & Interns

As we reflect on the 2024–2025 fiscal year, we want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional team. Your dedication, compassion, and professionalism are the foundation of everything we do.

To our **program coordinators** and **administrative staff**, thank you for keeping our operations running smoothly behind the scenes. Your attention to detail and client care ensure our programs are able to function effectively and reach those who need us most.

To our **women's support workers** – in the **Transition Houses**, your tireless work in providing safety, stability, and support is life-changing for the women and children who walk through our doors.

To the counsellors in **Stopping the Violence** and **PEACE**, thank you for creating safe, healing spaces for women, children, and youth navigating trauma and complex emotions.

To our **Community Outreach** team, your ability to meet individuals where they are and offer connection, resources, and hope continues to make a meaningful impact.

And to our **Community-Based Victim Services** and **Domestic Violence Liaison** staff, thank you for guiding individuals through the justice system with care and advocacy during some of their most vulnerable moments.

Each of you plays an essential role in our mission, and together, you create a network of support that empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and fosters change.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to this work.





*We honour, embrace and
celebrate the power, resilience,
courage and knowledge
of all women*



ADDRESS:
20316 56 AVE, SUITE #223,
LANGLEY, BC, V3A 3Y7

ISHTARSOCIETY.ORG
604-534-1011
CommunityRelations@ISHTARSOCIETY.ORG