

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Halton Women's Place

Healthy Relationships • Healthy Communities



From the Executive Director

The 2020 - 2021 year was full of change and transition. In September 2020, I was honoured to move into the role of Executive Director, while we also welcomed Heather Colquhoun, as our new Board Chair in June. We have seen significant accomplishments this year, as we continue to persevere in our vision to create a gateway to safety and support for women and children to live a life free from violence.

Over the past year, the world was told to stay home to keep everyone safe from COVID-19, but we know that home is not a safe place for everyone. As an agency and a sector, we have overcome significant challenges in the face of the pandemic. It highlighted for the world the dangers that many women face being isolated at home with abusive partners - no way to reach out, no reprieve and increased stressors that can exacerbate an already dangerous situation- at times a fatal situation. Women are not always able to safely call us or connect with their social supports as they would have before the pandemic.

Despite these challenges, we were able to continue to support many women and children through our shelter and community outreach programs. Halton Women's Place modified our services to continue to keep women safe from COVID-19 and ABUSE; implementing thorough infection prevention and control policies and redesigning our spaces to ensure women can be comfortable, supported, and safe during times of quarantine. We innovated and adapted, finding ways to best support the women and children through virtual connections and reaching out in new ways.

We cannot do our work alone and without the overwhelming support of so many others. I want to start by acknowledging our incredible staff team at Halton Women's Place, who have continued to show up each day with compassion, kindness and support for the women and children who need us the most. The resilience and tireless work of our team has been inspiring while they continue to adapt to new ways of doing the work and navigate the pandemic. Also, to our Board of Directors, we are so thankful for their steadfast commitment to Halton Women's Place. Our dedicated and passionate Board helped guide us with their diverse set of skills and expertise as we navigated this challenging year and our new strategic plan.

With so much gratitude, we thank the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Ministry of the Attorney General, and our community partners, including the Halton Region, Halton Regional Police Services, and the Community Foundations. We thank our generous donors, supporters, and volunteers. We did all of this with YOUR support in recognizing that the women and children of Halton needed you more than ever. We cannot do our work without the kindness, generosity, and compassion of individuals like YOU. And special thanks to everyone in Halton who has reached out to learn more about how to support someone experiencing violence. The Halton community has been instrumental in reaching out to help one another, to ensure family, friends and colleagues were safe. On behalf of all of us at Halton Women's Place, and the women and children that we are privileged to serve, thank you.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to recognize all the survivors of domestic violence. To those who have left abusive situations and to those still experiencing violence- we see you, we hear you, we believe you and we will continue to be here for you when you need us.



Laurie Hepburn

Executive Director

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

As Chair of the Board of Directors, I want to thank our staff, Board, partners, and community for all of your ongoing support towards a future free from violence for women and children in Halton. As an organization, Halton Women's Place has always been a strong example within our sector for its programs and services. This year challenged us all with the continued impact of the global pandemic, and all of you have rallied.

During this year, Halton Women's Place also experienced a change in leadership as Laurie Hepburn stepped into the Executive Director role in September 2020. A compassionate and dedicated leader, Laurie brings unique energy and experience to this role. On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to thank Laurie for exceptional leadership and work with the Board of Director's through these extraordinary times. We look forward to working with Laurie and the HWP team to carry out the mission and vision of Halton Women's Place.

I would also like to thank our volunteer Board and I'd like to also acknowledge a number of new Board members who have joined us this year, bringing a broad set of skills, experience and diverse perspectives to the 10-person board. And I'd like to thank a long-standing Board member who is retiring today, Janet Pickell. Janet, you have served with passion and dedication, and always brought HWP history into the conversation. You will be missed.To our new Board members who joined mid-year, this is an official welcome. We look forward to your growing involvement and support.

In early 2021, the Board and management team began working on the new strategic plan and you will see more in the coming months about the future of HWP, continuing the great work underway and focusing on ensuring accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of our diverse community. Our mission and vision remain unchanged and our commitment to them unwavering. In short, the board would be happy to see us able to close due to services no longer being needed. However, until then we will all continue the hard work, the important work, of providing a safe space for women and children on their way to living a life free from violence. On behalf of the HWP Board of Directors – I would like to again extend a thank you to our community, our partners, our volunteers, and our highly dedicated HWP employees for another tremendous year.

Heather Colquhoun

Chair, Board of Directors



Board of Directors



Heather Colquhoun
Board Chair



Derek Payne
Treasurer



Janet Pickell
Secretary



Julie Cowan
Director



Jerry Dias
Director



Irene Santos
Director



Leslie Starr-Hemburrow
Director



Megan Gill
Director



Barbara Love
Director



Ayesha Shah
Director

HIGHLIGHTS



HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICES & HALTON WOMEN'S PLACE LAUNCH MEMORIAL FOR INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

In November 2020, in partnership with the Halton Regional Police Services we established a Memorial site, dedicated to victims of domestic violence in Halton. This site, located at Halton Regional Police Headquarters – serves as a symbol of our shared commitment in ending violence in our community and provides a space for families to remember and honour their loved ones lost to intimate partner violence.





HWP LAUNCHES ONLINE CHAT TOOL FOR SURVIVORS

We launched a 24 hour web-based on line chat, in order to be more accessible and available for women in our community, as we knew that not every women would be able to contact our 24 hour Crisis, Information and Support Lines when they needed it - this provided an alternative, and much needed option for women in our community.

NEW TRANSITIONAL HOUSING UNITS FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

We continue to need affordable housing options here in Halton for women and children. In collaboration with Habitat for Humanity and the Halton Region, we successfully opened 3 new transitional housing units in Burlington. These units provide a home for women and children to continue to move forward in creating the life of safety they desire and deserve.





NEW VIRTUAL GROUP "RECORDING RESILIENCE" CAPTURES COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

This year, in collaboration with The Women's Centre, Halton Women's Place was able to launch virtual "Resilience Groups" with the Emergency Community Support Fund through the Government of Canada and United Way Halton & Hamilton. This eight-week group, facilitated by a therapist and by artist, Brilliance Mastery, captures the collective strength of survivors. The women report a sense of comfort supporting and witnessing other survivors, while also learning to extend that same kindness and compassion towards themselves.





Programs & Services

Re-designing & Re-imagining Spaces

The theme of this past year, was CHANGE. When the Pandemic began to impact our community, our incredible team of employees and leaders came together to adjust our services to best meet the needs of the women in our community, however this had to be done in a way that we have never encountered before.





HWP quickly adjusted the way that we worked in so many ways:

- We launched a 24 hour web-based on line chat, in order to be more accessible and available for women in our community
- Our Community Services Team adjusted the way they worked by going virtual with supportive counseling, webinars and information sessions
- The layout of our shelters was modified to safely socially distance quarantine and isolate as required to keep everyone safe from COVID-19

Even though we had to adjust services to meet the ever-changing needs and safety protocols, we continued to grow as an organization;

- We opened three (3) additional transitional housing units, have been able to support multiple different women/families within these unit
- We worked with our amazing community partners to explore other safe housing options when women were unable to reside in shelter due to the restrictions and space limitations.
- We launched Virtual Resiliency Groups with The Women's Centre of Halton which captured the collective strength of survivors.

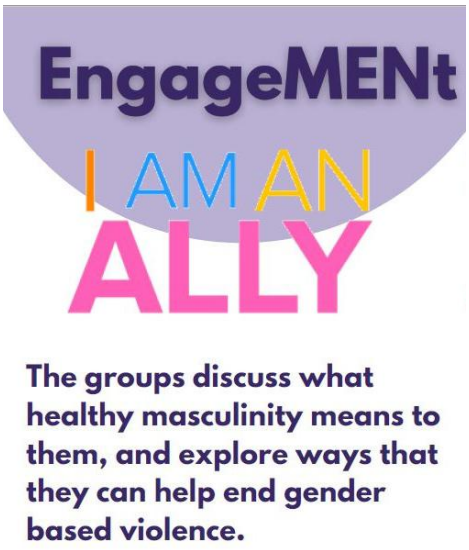
Over this past year, it was because of our incredible staff team, our dedicated funders and our outstanding community, supporters and donors, we were able to continued our mission, that "Halton Women's Place will provide a safe haven, information, and education to support a future without abuse for women and their children".



Amy Marshall

Manager of Programs and Services

Public Education & Violence Prevention



The Public Education Program educates youth across Halton about healthy relationships and engages youth in violence prevention. With presentations for grades 1-12, as well as a male ally program, our educators reach thousands of youth each year. Despite a year of uncertainty and change, the Public Education Program continued to provide our education and awareness services to the Halton community. We continued to be a sought after resource by schools and teachers across the region

With the sudden school closures in mid-March 2020, our team:

- Began modifying our program for virtual delivery
- Adapted our program by providing pre-recorded presentations to schools
- Created live virtual presentations
- Offered several community webinars
- Hosted our first virtual youth conference for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month
- Started our own podcast, “The Youth Pod,” launching 18 episodes





Jerusha Mack

Supervisor of Public Education and Violence Prevention

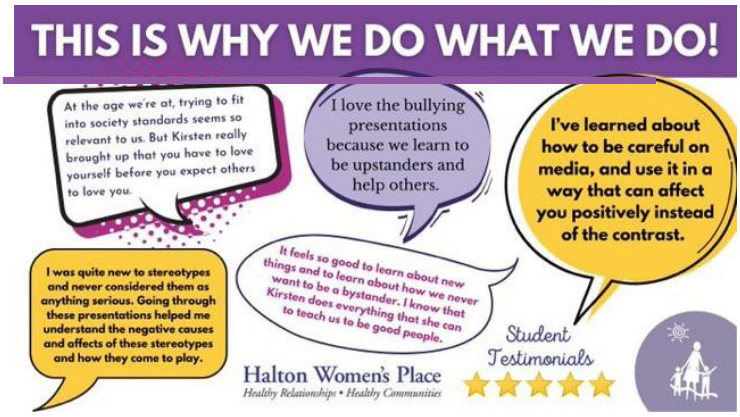
The podcast was designed to be another way to deliver relationship health education to youth and our community. The podcast engaged youth and our community in conversations that we believe can help change the culture that normalizes behaviors and attitudes which perpetuate violence against women.

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Our team expanded the Public Education Program welcoming 75 Youth Ambassadors who represented 12 schools across Halton.

This program represented our desire to expand awareness and education by making youth the leaders in relationship health education with their peers. Whether they were sharing informative posts on their social media accounts, helped create awareness videos, or helped plan our virtual conference – for the first time, youth across Halton were active participants and engaged partners with our public education program.









#CHOOSETOCHALLENGE

The HWP team got together to take the pledge to #ChoosetoChallenge & show our commitment to challenging inequality, calling out bias, questioning stereotypes & helping to forge an inclusive world. Strike the pose, and make the commitment with us!

#IWD2021 #InternationalWomensDay

EVEN THROUGH A YEAR LIKE THIS, THE COMMUNITY HAD OUR BACK



This past year has shown us at Halton Women's Place the incredible generousity and support of our community. This pandemic has absolutely affected fundraising. With the elimination of face-to-face meetings and events, we pivoted our fundraising and stewardship efforts into the virtual world! Here are some ways how we did this:

- Successfully organized a virtual Hope in High Heels walk for men week. Many boys and men STILL wanted the high heels even though we said it was not mandatory this year. Now, that's commitment to the cause!

- Reimagined our typical holiday giving program and granted shelter holiday wishes– We received more than 800 donations for this initiative!

- Annual gala STILL had 400 people - VIRTUALLY – in February. We had local super star band Walk off the Earth join us and our guests helped us raise more than $130,000 for our public education program that night!





We had many groups and corporations come forward this year to be a part of our Safe Shelter Sponsorship opportunity as well our community really rallied with our meal sponsorship program that we launched when we had to first close our communal kitchens down. That particular program raised $10,000, which also supported local restaurants.

We MISS meeting our donors in person and giving tours of our shelters and celebrating at our events. We are so grateful and humbled to have been helped in such amazing ways this year by our amazing community. Until then, we thank YOU for choosing Halton Women's Place as a charity of choice during this past year.



Carm Bozzo

Manager of
Development &
Communications









With so much gratitude, we thank ALL our donors – who have reached out to help



Thank you to our Safe Shelter Sponsors for 2020-2021

Royal LePage Burloak Real Estate Services
Nora's Gift Foundation
Moen
Quadra Chemicals
Amazon YYZ2 Milton
Zonta Club of Oakville
Maple Lodge Farms Foundation
St. Matthew's Mar Thoma Church
Woodbine Entertainment
Hayward Gordon

Special Thanks to our Funders

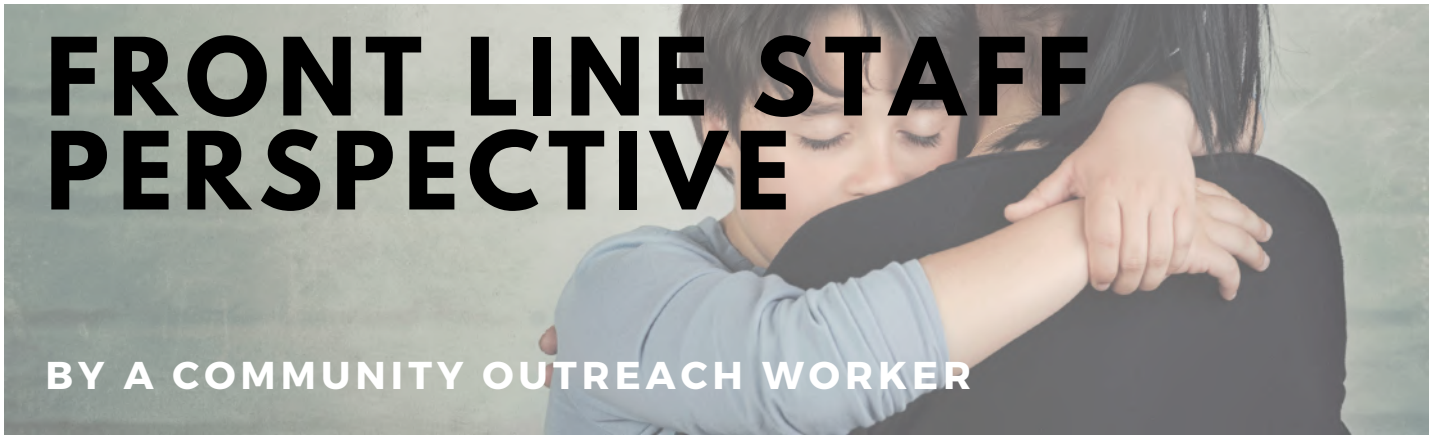
The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

The Ministry of the Attorney General

The Halton Region
Halton Regional Police Services

The Community Foundations – Burlington and Oakville.

Thank you!



FRONT LINE STAFF PERSPECTIVE

BY A COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER

When the world locked down in March of 2020, being an outreach worker suddenly became an even more difficult role at Halton Women's Place. Working with women who are in abusive relationships is never easy. Now, even more than ever, relationship violence is hidden. Quite literally, our clients are experiencing abuse behind closed (locked down) doors. Stressors have never been greater for the women we work with and I promise that the isolation we all feel is felt exponentially more by the residents and clients of Halton Women's Place.

As an outreach worker working from home, so many aspects of my job had to be reimagined. Expressing empathy and compassion over the phone is no easy task. The importance of being able to recognize and read nonverbal communication while creating a safe space for women to share their traumatic instances of partner violence is paramount. Most of our outreach clients have no safe space to communicate virtually.

Finding safe, affordable housing has always been a large barrier for women accessing HWP. Through this lengthy pandemic, this challenge has increased. This means many of our clients are at a disadvantage and continue to struggle to find affordable housing within their home region.

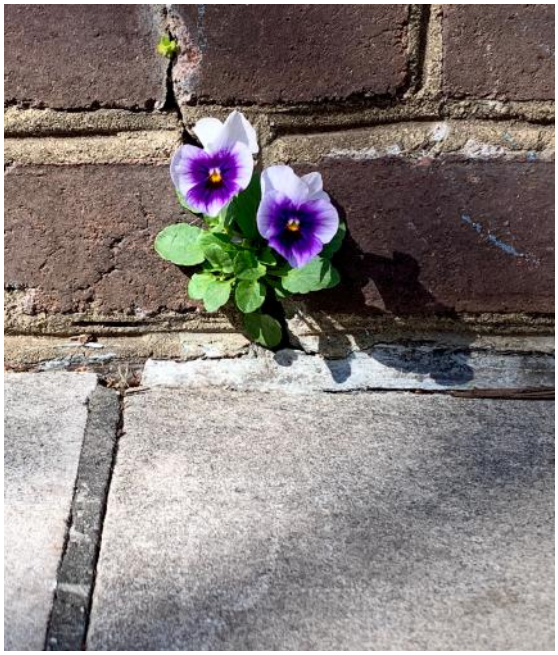
It is important to note how well Halton Women's Place has worked with other social service agencies to accommodate the clients. Our sister agencies have been invaluable as we have built villages around our clients. I am filled with pride to work alongside my colleagues who do similar work in Halton and belonging to this team of Outreach Workers has been a bright spot in an otherwise difficult period. To do this job well, you need to be selfless, creative, determined, and empathetic. My team has all these qualities in excess, and they continue to inspire me to do this work.

Melissa

Community Outreach Worker

COURAGEOUS FIRST STEPS THROUGH THE HWP DOORS

A Survivor's Story



Talk about having your own personal cheerleaders!!! Instantly upon my arrival @HWP I was assured that my safety and wellbeing is top priority. Coming in, I had no clue what to expect, especially with Covid effect. I was very skeptical as my personal circumstances caused me to be fragile, stressed and untrusting. During my stay those parts of me began melting away.

HWP staff over time has provided me with various support resources and outlets. The webinars have been my personal favorite; definitely had me open up, became more vocal and confident. It didn't matter what time or type of question, concern, comments or feelings I had, HWP staff was always readily available and attentive to my needs. HWP staff makes the environment welcoming, clean, secure and inspiring.

I am thankful for staff. I am thankful for the mental gifts, nutritional gifts, physical gifts and most importantly, the gift of shelter, safety and protection. It feels good to know that HWP has my best interests. It feels good to know that it's never too late and there is help out there. It feels good to know that I am in control. I am resilient. I am thankful.

"I WAS VERY SKEPTICAL AS MY PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED ME TO BE FRAGILE, STRESSED AND UNTRUSTING DURING MY STAY"

Signed, A Survivor, 2020

Your support meant you helped...

April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

316 WOMEN WHO RECEIVED TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

4374 TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES BY PHONE OR IN-PERSON

2088 24 HOUR CRISIS, INFORMATION & SUPPORT LINE

70 WOMEN STAYING IN SHELTER



66 CHILDREN STAYING IN SHELTER



124 HWP CHAT LINE

112 COURT SUPPORT

BRIDGING FAMILIES

94 FAMILIES SERVED

187 CHILDREN SERVED

Halton Regional Police Services Statistics

3747 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE CALLS IN 2020

885 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE CALLS IN 2021 (JAN-MAR)





868 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ARRESTS 2020

216 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ARRESTS 2021 (JAN - MAR)

1995 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE CHARGES IN 2020





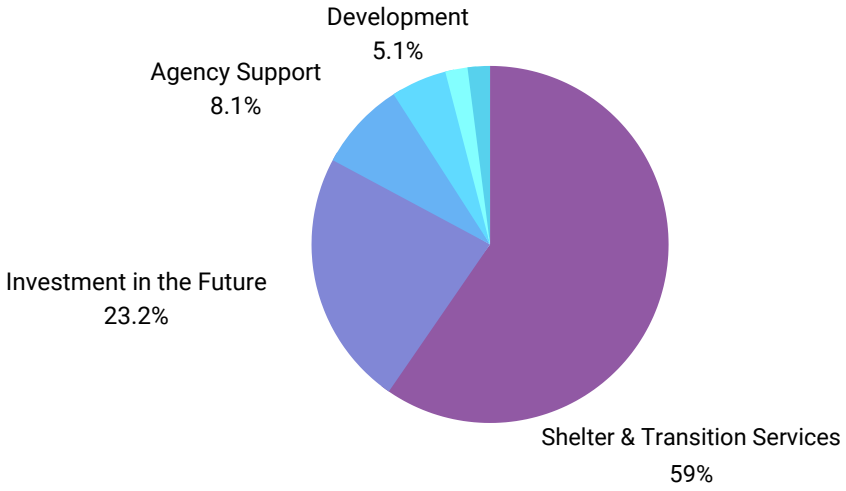
534 INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE CHARGES IN 2021 (JAN - MAR)

HALTON WOMEN'S PLACE FINANCIAL REPORT APRIL 1, 2020 TO MARCH 31, 2021

Audited financial statements available upon request

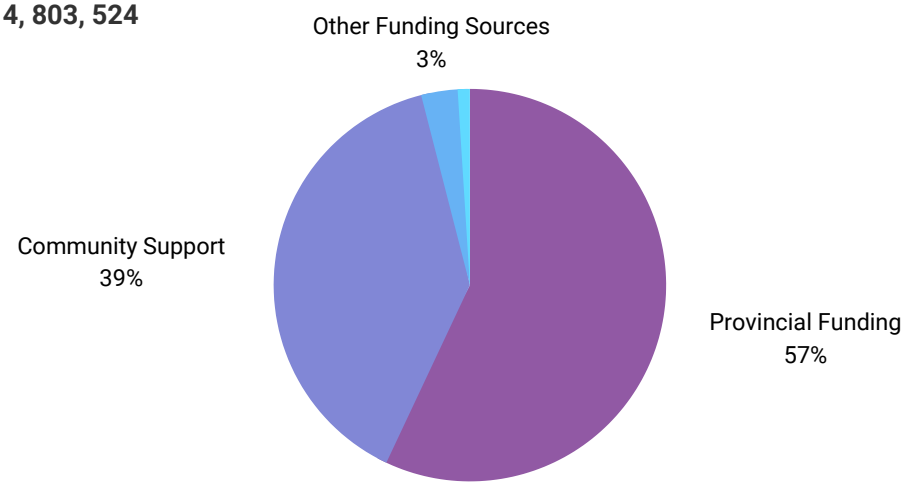
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

SHELTER & TRANSITION SERVICES	$ 2,855,182
AGENCY SUPPORT	$ 401, 644
DEVELOPMENT	$ 259, 395
BRIDGING FAMILY SERVICES	$ 107, 322
OTHER INITIATIVES	$ 92, 543
INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE	$ 1, 087, 438
	$ 4, 803, 524



SOURCES OF FUNDING

PROVINCIAL FUNDING	$ 2, 737, 766
COMMUNITY SUPPORT	$ 1, 865, 817
OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	$ 131, 441
GRANTS	$ 68, 500
	$ 4, 803, 524





Halton Women's Place will provide a safe haven, information and education to support a future without abuse for women and their children.

Mailing Address:
Halton Women's Place
2211 Brant Street, #20060
Burlington, ON L7P 0A4

Administration: 905-332-1200
Fax: 905-332-1155
Email: info@haltonwomensplace.com

REACH OUT TODAY

24-Hour Crisis, Information and Support Line

Burlington & Oakville: 905-332-7892
Milton & Halton Hills: 905-878-8555
HWP Online Chat haltonwomensplace.com/chat/

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Halton Women's Place
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