



# Nellie's

Serving Women & Children in Our Community Since 1973



## Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009

Approved December 2006

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# Background

In June of 2006, Nellie's began the strategic planning process for 2007 to 2009. The process was a collaborative effort which involved extensive consultation with multiple stakeholders, including clients, students, volunteers, staff, Board of Directors, community partners and funders. The process also included assessing the social, political and economic environment in which Nellie's operates through an environmental scan and an analysis of Nellie's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Demographic considerations were another important aspect of the planning work to ensure that Nellie's would be prepared to meet future needs. The strategic planning process was overseen by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, a joint staff and Board committee. It was developed with the assistance of Adobe Consulting Services and DA Falconer & Associates.

The Strategic Plan will inform Nellie's priorities and programming for the next three years – January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2009. Nellie's has identified **four strategic directions** that will guide us. There is commitment at all levels of the organization to achieve these strategic directions.



# Mission and Values

## Mission

Our Mission is to operate programs and services for women and children who have and are experiencing oppressions such as violence, poverty and homelessness. Nellie's is a community based feminist organization which operates within an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework. We are committed to social change through education and advocacy, to achieve social justice for all women and children.

## Values

**Integrated Feminism, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression** – Nellie's analysis and framework is shaped by an integrated feminist, anti-racism, anti-oppression approach, which means we understand society as being fundamentally based on patriarchal social relations as well as by racism and multiple other forms of oppression on the basis of class, age, sexual orientation, disAbility, gender identification, color, place of origin, citizenship, religion, political affiliation, record of offences, marital status, family status, life experiences and appearance. Our analysis also highlights the complexity of dominant power relations, including the ways these multiple forms of oppression work together to create differential impacts and diverse needs and issues for different groups of women. Systemic discrimination and oppression must be addressed as part of an integrated approach to addressing all forms of violence against women.

**In keeping with our commitment to the values of the organization, Nellie's will:**

Respond with programs and services that meet the needs of the diversity of women, children and youth who have experienced abuse, poverty, homelessness, and violence. Programs and services that address the needs of children and youth will positively impact their health and well being allowing them to grow and prosper. Programs and services that address the needs of women and strengthen their economic and social position will enable them to protect and support themselves and their children.



# Context

Throughout our planning process and in our day-to-day work with women, children and youth, the following informs what we do and how we do it:

**Violence Against Women, Children and Youth** – Violence against women, children and youth must not be accepted as inevitable by our society. We need to fight to change social, economic and political conditions so that violence is eradicated but until that time comes, women need to be able to access the means to protect themselves and their children from violence in their lives.

Women's safety depends on a long term, comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of women's social, economic and political inequality. Violence against women is a gender-specific reality and requires a solution specific to the experiences of women. While eradication of violence is the goal, this can only be achieved if accountability mechanisms are built into all of our social, political and economic systems, and our systems of community organization, to ensure that they respond to the needs and rights of women, children and youth to be free from violence. Women's input in transforming these systems is needed. These systems were not designed to promote, and do not in fact promote, equality and freedom from violence for women, children and youth.

**Social Justice** – Nellie's positions on social justice issues are based on the mission statement of the organization and are rooted in Nellie's experience in providing services to vulnerable women, children and youth in the community. Positions are informed by the experiences of the women, children and youth we work with and through the organization's broader work and participation in the community. The broad development of policy in the areas of poverty, violence, homelessness and oppression has enabled the organization to remain focused in the work, and able to speak on and participate in broader social justice work at the municipal, provincial and federal government level. The strategies, in particular, recognize and include community partnership, coalition building, education, service responses and cross-sectoral approaches to achieving economic and political equality for all women, children and youth.

**Women and Homelessness** – All women, children and youth have the right to safe, affordable, permanent housing. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights affirms the basic and fundamental right to have housing that provides protection from the elements; allows access to safe water and sanitation; is accompanied by secure tenancy; protects personal safety; is within easy reach of employment, education and health care; and does not cost more than is required to fulfill other basic needs such as food. Women's homelessness is a result of social, political, economic and gender inequality. Women who are survivors of domestic violence are at an increased risk for homelessness.

**Poverty** – We view poverty as a form of violence against women and their children, and believe that poverty can and should be eradicated. All women, children and youth have the right to adequate resources to meet their basic needs, both material needs including food, clothing and shelter, and their basic need for security, independence and self realization to achieve their goals. Women, children and youth have the right to be free from fear, hunger, homelessness, and vulnerability to abuse or mistreatment.



# Strategic Directions

Four strategic directions will guide Nellie's work for 2007 to 2009.

**1**

## **Strengthen and increase our organizational capacity.**

Nellie's has tremendous human resources in our staff, management, Board of Directors, volunteers and students. We recognize that there is more we could be doing to build on and better utilize these human resources. We have identified that all of our current physical space is inadequate to meet our needs.

Nellie's is committed to enhancing our strong organizational foundation and nurturing and sustaining the learning organization environment we have created. We will build our human resources capacity through training and development. We will review our organization and implement systems and structures to support vibrant staff and management teams, and an active Board of Directors. We will explore opportunities for increasing our staff resources. We will be creative with our committed volunteers and students to enhance what we do and how we do it. We will undertake a comprehensive review of our physical space with the goal of attaining accessible and appropriate space to better carry out our work and deliver quality programs and services.

**2**

## **Stabilize and pursue additional sources of funding.**

As a non-profit organization, Nellie's depends on a variety of funding sources to sustain and continue to enhance our programs and services. We recognize that some of these sources have or will become less reliable.

We will explore new funding opportunities to complement the current support that we receive from our funders. We will nurture our positive relationships with existing funders while creating new ones with new funders. To frame our approach, we will develop and implement a fund development strategy aimed at achieving stable, secure funding; acquiring new public and private funding sources; and increasing our revenues. We will review our marketing and branding strategies and undertake initiatives to clearly identify and better promote who we are, what we value and what we do. All of the staff, Board and volunteers of the agency will help support the pursuit of funding.



### **3 Further our role in advocacy and social justice for women, children and youth.**

Nellie's has a long history of playing a leadership role in advocacy and addressing issues around all forms of violence against women, children and youth. We have taken strong positions knowingly because of our commitment to a more just world.

We will continue to consult with the women, children and youth we serve to identify where we need to advocate to ensure their needs are better addressed and with the goal of ending all forms of violence against all women, children and youth. We will integrate social justice work at all levels of the organization. We will work with community partners, coalitions, and allies, and participate in public policy consultation, development and planning at the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. We will increase our visibility and the visibility of critical social justice issues. We will build on our tradition of leadership and facilitate broad based systemic change.

### **4 Provide innovative and responsive programs and services for women, children and youth.**

Nellie's has been committed to providing quality programs for women, children and youth since its inception. We are unique in our sector because we respond to women, children and youth who experience all forms of violence and are multiply marginalized. The need for programs and services that respond to the issue of violence against women in a holistic way and within an integrated feminist, anti-racism, anti-oppression framework is deep. We recognize that a significant service gap exists for transwomen, disAbled women, women without status, immigrant women, women with mental health issues and sex workers.

We will enhance our capacity to monitor and evaluate our programs and services. We will evaluate all of our current programs and services at both sites and explore integration and coordination possibilities. We will determine changes to programs and services based on established needs, identified gaps and our capacity to respond. We will continue the expansion of the community support and outreach program. We will explore additional opportunities for programming for children and youth. We will nurture our existing relationships and consider a full range of partnership options with other organizations where such partnerships improve what we do, how we do it and the condition of the women, children and youth we serve.

# Appendix

Nellie's was named after Canadian Nellie McClung, a woman activist and member of the "Famous Five". Nellie's was incorporated in 1973. Since then, Nellie's has provided shelter and support to thousands of women, children and youth for over 33 years.

## What We Do

### Shelter

We operate a 36 bed emergency shelter for women and their children who are homeless and leaving all forms of violence. We operate a 24 hour crisis line for women. The shelter operates annually at full occupancy. At least double the number of women, children and youth that are admitted to the shelter are turned away due to lack of space.

The primary service provided is shelter and safety.

Counselling is provided to women, children and youth throughout their stay. Support is an essential component to the work we do. Counsellors will assist women by advocating with the police, lawyers, courts, social service system, housing, medical, immigration, employment and educational systems. We will also accompany women to places such as court, legal appointments, and hospitals.

We provide information and referral assistance in areas such as housing, legal aid, lawyers, medical and health, income assistance, counselling, day-care, education including English as a second language upgrading, post secondary programs, employment and training. There are also regular social, recreational and educational programs for women, children and youth in the Shelter. We offer in-house programs for women in areas such as parenting, health, housing, employment, arts and anti-oppression.



## **From Shelter to Community: Nellie's Community Support and Outreach Program**

The Community Support and Outreach Program provides aftercare and follow-up support and service to women and their children who have left the shelter and are now living in the community. The program also serves women, children and youth in the community through referrals and walk-in service. We provide both individual and group support to women and their children.

In December each year, we have a special holiday party and in the summer, hold a barbecue for former residents and their children. We provide ex-resident support to over two hundred families annually.

We also participate in community events such as the Take Back the Night Rally and March, the December 6th Vigil, International Woman's Day, and Lesbian and Gay Pride Day.



## **Community Advocacy**

We have been a member of the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses since 1984 and are members of the Ontario Hostel Association, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants and the Metro Woman Abuse Council. We are also active in a number of community coalitions addressing issues such as violence, poverty, homelessness and oppression.