



**Your
Impact
Report**

2019



**Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children**

“We are always forever grateful for you, our donors.”

– Margarita Mendez, Executive Director



A new year always brings promises of new growth, new opportunities and new achievements. This is no different for the women and children who come to Nellie's. After experiencing abuse and trauma, many women first come to us seeking nothing but shelter. And it is through Nellie's that they learn, gain support, find friends and build the confidence they need to successfully accomplish the next chapter in their lives.

And they are able to do all of this because of your support.

We are forever grateful for the generosity of our donors near and far. It's because of you that we can provide the day-to-day necessities of life as well as the outreach programs and services that are designed to foster learning and support. You have always ensured that we are able to tailor our responses to meet the needs of the women and children living at Nellie's, as well as those using the programs and services at our community support and outreach site.

We bring together women from all walks of life; women who may never have had the opportunity to meet but who are now meaningfully connecting with each other as they learn to support each other. As we at Nellie's look towards our 50th anniversary in 2023, we will continue to take the much-needed courageous steps to help women and their children experiencing abuse and trauma overcome the multitude of barriers they face.

I am confident that the persistent diligence and enthusiasm of our Board of Directors, the ongoing dedication and hard work of our talented staff and the support of our generous donors will ensure that we will continue to rise to every challenge in the coming year.

Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Thank you for all you do!

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

- Thanks to you **staff was able to answer 1,339 crisis calls** last year. 
- You helped provide **transportation support 7,368 times** so women and children living in shelter and in the community could attend legal and medical appointments, view safe housing options, and access our food van. 
- You helped ensure that over 100 women and their children living in the shelter, in poverty or who are at risk of homelessness in the community still had **holiday celebrations**. 
- Your support helped **provide transitional housing support** for women living in the community who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. 

Because of you, Nellie's gives hope

When Krystal Joseph* first arrived in Toronto, she was five months pregnant and had her two-year-old daughter, Joshae, in tow. She stepped off a plane at Pearson airport from her home in Antigua with just \$700 to her name and dreams of a better life for her and her kids. It was a friend who had convinced her to come to Canada by also promising her a place to stay.

That promise of a home didn't last.

Kicked out on the street after just one month and with nowhere to go, Krystal quickly found her way to Nellie's Shelter where staff immediately took her and her daughter in.

"I was so scared that first night. I had no one else here in Canada but the staff at Nellie's took us in like if we were family," says Krystal. "When we arrived at Nellie's, we had nothing but they took care of us – asked me what we needed and gave us things like lotions and things for Joshae. It really gave me hope."

Krystal and Joshae immediately settled into a routine. "I think Joshae was happy that we were in a place with other people and children. They had toys and she saw that there was a community. It was her home. In my mind I knew what Nellie's is and where we were, but in her mind, it was like Disneyland. As her mother, it made me feel better to see that she felt safe."

Joshae visited the Children's Program in the house every Wednesday and Friday evening ("She made me the most wonderful art presents every week," says Krystal), while Krystal immersed herself in some of Nellie's many group programs.

"I knew I could do it because people were rooting for me and pushing me and reassuring me that I was going to be okay. I never had anything like that in my life before."
– Krystal Joseph

In one program she learned how to cook on a budget; in another she developed a better understanding of how to manage her finances; and in yet another she came to understand the emotional abuse she had endured at the hands of the so-called friend that brought her to Canada.

"They did a wonderful job in terms of getting us on our feet while also having fun at the same time. The staff at Nellie's made me feel special and safe. They gave me hope," she says.

A few months into her stay at Nellie's, her daughter, Journey, was born. Her birth only strengthened Krystal's passion to give her two daughters a better life. She passed her high school equivalency exam, started college, volunteered often and found a job as a Geriatric Support Worker. Her greatest challenge was finding a home. A Nellie's Housing Support Worker was always by her side as she filled out housing applications.

"I knew I could do it because people were rooting for me and pushing me and reassuring me that I was going to be okay. I never had anything like that in my life before."

In September 2018, Krystal, Joshae and Journey moved into their own home. Nellie's staff referred her to other community agencies so that she could furnish it. The kids love it, she says. "They're throwing toys all over the house and driving me crazy! It's perfect."

And she is forever grateful for the care and support they all got while living at Nellie's.

"I'm never ashamed to say I lived in a shelter. Nellie's wasn't a shelter for me, it was so much more than that – it was my home and the people there were my family."

**Krystal also told her story in our 2018 holiday mailing, but this time she chose to share her real name, as well as the real names of both of her children. Thank you, Krystal.*

Krystal and her wonderful girls

"I was so scared that first night. I had no one else here in Canada but the staff at Nellie's took us in like if we were family,"

– Krystal Joseph



Because of you, Nellie's can provide the programs and services our community needs.



For more than 45 years, women just like Krystal have come to Nellie's. Their stories may differ but their reasons are the same – they have no one to turn to and no home to return to. At Nellie's, we give them a home where they feel safe and a community where they are supported. Thanks to donors like you, these are just some of the many programs that are available to the women and children living at Nellie's.

CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Abuse destroys a child's view of the world as a safe and predictable place. Children suffering from the effects of abuse and trauma often learn that bad things happen no matter how hard you try to be good. The Children's Program uses art and creative interventions to provide a safe space for children to express their thoughts and feelings. The children can play, connect with each other in a group activity or learn and practice conflict resolution skills. It gives the children living at Nellie's a space to be kids again while giving their mothers a few hours to themselves.

HOUSING PROGRAM

A lack of affordable housing in Toronto means that more women are staying longer at Nellie's than ever before. While living at the shelter, every woman is connected with a Transitional Housing Support Worker who is focused on helping them find and maintain safe and affordable housing. Every woman is helped through the housing application process, learns about safety planning and crisis support and is connected to any other community resources they need to establish themselves in their new homes, such as finding furniture and other household items.

WORKSHOP SERIES

Peer Support Groups bring together women who have had similar experiences to talk, listen and share strategies for coping and overcoming violence and oppression. Workshops are organized and offered throughout the year to help the women, living in the shelter and in the community, enhance their knowledge on educational topics and life skills, such as budgeting, parenting and tenants' rights, as well as ones focusing on coping strategies, abuse and on preventing the cycle of violence.

GIFTS-IN-KIND

The needs of women and children living at Nellie's are constantly changing. Many have fled violence, poverty and homelessness and arrive at Nellie's with nothing. Through the Gifts-in-Kind Program, Nellie's is able to provide essential items, such as new clothing, underwear and basic toiletries to the women and children living in the shelter.

FOOD PROGRAM

For families in our community experiencing food insecurity, the Food Program provides fresh, pre-cooked and non-perishable food donations. This program serves two purposes. First it helps about 80 families with their ability to gain and maintain stable housing and cover their basic needs and emergency expenses without going hungry. And second, it helps our volunteers – who are already a part of our extended community – in building their skills and confidence in order to enhance their employable skills.



Because of you, women and children who are fleeing violence, poverty and homelessness are able to access shelter, support and the essential programs and services they need to help make changes in their lives.

**Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children**



Nellie's

Nellies.org | 416-461-8903 | fundraising@nellies.org |  @nelliesshelter

CHARITABLE REG #11930 2727 RR0001