

Nellie's



Annual Report 2019-2020



*Maureen Caines-Comrie,
Shelter Manager (left)
Joyti Singh,
Executive Director*

Message from Our Board Chairs



Donna Kellway
Co-Chair



Sherece Taffe
Co-Chair

Back in 2006, when former Executive Director Margarita Mendez took on the role, she dreamed of moving the shelter into a new space, one that would allow us to treat vulnerable women with the dignity they and their children deserve.

For over 47 years, women and their children who experience violence, poverty and homelessness have sought more than just a bed in our beautiful, historic residential building.

And while, through our programs and services, we stand alongside them as they take the brave steps towards accomplishing the next chapter in their lives, our space has long been too small for our needs.

Last summer, we achieved our vision of finding a new building that offered greater accessibility and greater privacy for residents. Thanks in large part to a substantial investment from the Government of Ontario, we purchased our new home.

As she retired from her position as Executive Director in 2020, Margarita ensured that Nellie's will continue to grow and thrive on a strong foundation that will propel us to the next level.

She has been a fierce advocate for the women and their children who come to Nellie's and we thank her for her dedication and commitment.

On March 5, 2020, we welcomed Jyoti Singh as our new Executive Director. Together with the Board, staff, and the women and children at Nellie's, we look forward to her leadership, guidance and compassion.

We truly believe that only great things are ahead for Nellie's.

Message from the Executive Director Jyoti Singh



My first weeks as Executive Director of Nellie's were challenging. My first day was on a Thursday, and five days later, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Everything I knew from my experience in community-based programming and policy administration with a focus on working with marginalized populations, and everything I hoped to steadily learn about Nellie's, no longer applied. Almost everything changed.

We quickly implemented new safety protocols in the shelter, suspended most of our community programs (our transitional housing workers continued to provide virtual and/or telephone support to the women in our community), changed how we delivered our programs, and developed a new normal.

What didn't change was our dedication to our mission.

For more than 47 years, Nellie's has always been more than a bed, and a global pandemic wouldn't change that. All of our programs and services are designed to meet the immediate and specific needs of the women and their children who come to Nellie's. They create positive spaces, therapeutic healing, and personal growth. They help overcome obstacles and show a way forward. Because of every one of our generous donors, much as we did every day before the pandemic, we continued to provide vital counselling sessions, children's programming, safety planning, outreach services, violence against women workshops, and much more to help the women and children at Nellie's take the steps towards accomplishing the next chapter in their lives.

However, we believe that change is always necessary, and we continually look at emerging needs in order to create the greatest impact on our clients and our community.

As we look to the future, we will be reassessing and rethinking how we deliver all of our programs, not just to ensure everyone's health and safety, but to make sure they are inclusive for all. At Nellie's, we operate within an anti-racism and anti-oppression framework, but the Black Lives Matter movement reminds us that we always have more to learn and we can always find ways to do better.

Our role in the community is a demanding one, and our long-term focus continues to be on our move to our new shelter in 2021. I credit former Executive Director Margarita Mendez and our board of directors, under the leadership of Sherece Taffe and Donna Kellway, with their vision to find a new space that offered greater accessibility and greater privacy for residents. With 36 beds across 22 bedrooms (and 20 bathrooms), this vision now means we will have a shelter with an increased ability to implement health and safety measures—measures that will keep everyone at Nellie's safe during the pandemic, and safe during any future outbreaks or health concerns.

Thank you to our staff for their unwavering dedication to providing positive spaces and meeting the needs of the women and their children who come to Nellie's, to our volunteers for selflessly devoting their time and energy, to our neighbours for always welcoming and supporting us, to our Board for continually rising to the challenge, and to the women and their children who put their trust in us every day.

Finally, thank you to our community funding partners and every one of our donors. It is because of your vital support that we have the strength and determination to meet not only today's needs, but tomorrow's as well.

Because of you, we met the needs of the women and children we serve

Housing Program

Many of the women who turn to Nellie's for support are homeless or facing eviction. Once they find housing, many factors can contribute to their struggle to maintain it. Our Transitional Housing Program offers eviction support to help these women stay in their homes. During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, Nellie's dedicated Transitional Housing staff assisted women in shelter and community clients secure new housing and retain existing housing.



113 women secured housing during the year

# of women with children who found permanent housing	28
# of single women who found permanent housing	28
# of women who moved to subsidized housing	36
# of women who moved to private market rentals	21

47 women received assistance to maintain housing

Community Programs

Peer Support Groups bring together women who have had similar experiences to talk, listen, and share strategies for coping and overcoming violence and oppression.



# of community program hours provided	244
# of families in holiday program	124
# of visits to weekly food bank program	3380

Shelter Snapshot



# of women fleeing violence/intimate partner abuse	68
# of single women	77
# of families (women with children)	65
# of children 0-17 who stayed at Nellie's	37
# of babies born during the year	6
Average length of stay in shelter (in months)	6

Because of you, we met a housing crisis with a way forward

Olivia never lived at Nellie's shelter. But she is no stranger to Nellie's.

Almost six years ago, Olivia and her then 12-year-old daughter, Grace, found themselves facing eviction. Despite working as many hours as her part-time job would give her, she still found herself unable to pay rent. With help from our Transitional Housing Program, an application for appeal was successfully filed, allowing Olivia and Grace to stay in their home. But stability didn't last and a few years later, Olivia, now pregnant, and Grace found themselves without a home. With no other family to turn to, they settled at a nearby family shelter.

"I felt like I hit rock bottom," says Olivia.

"After I lost my house, I was on my own and I didn't know what to do and who to turn to for help until I met Diana (Galeano) at Nellie's (Transitional Housing Support Program)."

Nellie's Transitional Housing Program helps homeless women find a place to live and offers eviction support to help women stay in their homes. This support can take many forms, including providing guidance on accessing emergency funding to pay rent, advocating on their behalf on landlord-tenant issues, accompanying them to housing tribunal hearings, or offering referrals to legal clinics.

"Every single client we work with is different. We work with each one of them as individuals with unique needs," says Diana, a Transitional Support Worker at Nellie's. "Everyone's goal is different and I help them achieve their goals."

Six months after Olivia and Grace lost their home, they moved into their own subsidized housing unit. But support didn't end there.

When her second daughter, Danielle, was born, Diana also helped Olivia fight for child support payments for both girls. She has also fought for Olivia when her rent was raised above her means.

"Until now, everybody in my life just passed through for a few weeks or months and then it would all collapse again," says Olivia. "But Nellie's has been there for me for such a long time and no matter how hard it is for me, Nellie's always shows me the way."



Olivia, Danielle & Diana

Because of you, we met a global health crisis with compassion

As our fiscal year wound down, the global COVID-19 pandemic took hold and social and physical distancing began keeping us apart like never before. The women and their children living at Nellie's were asked to stay six feet apart from each other and staff at all times, tape lines on the floor of the office marked where everyone must stand, and cleaning and disinfection measures were stepped up.

"Most of the women understood why we made new rules," says Maureen Caines-Comrie, Nellie's Shelter Manager. "But naturally when we're talking to a woman in our shelter, we want to come close to them and help them. That's what we do. And the babies living in our shelter just want to snuggle in your lap and we had to resist."

Even with the big changes, our front line staff continued to create positive spaces in any way they could. Some programs, such as our Children's Program, continued at a safe social distance. The playroom was opened every day except Sundays (previously it has only been open twice a week) to give kids a place to be kids, and their mothers a chance to take a daily break. A school section was also created to help older kids with their online education.

Two relief cooks were hired to prepare additional meals for the women and children in our shelter to encourage everyone to stay inside as much as possible. Previously, only dinner was prepared for residents, leaving each person to use the kitchen to prepare their remaining meals for the day with groceries provided by us. For the families who live here, Nellie's is more than a shelter -it's their home. While social distancing has made it difficult for us to share meals and create a feeling of commonality among us, home cooked meals feel comforting and secure.

Unfortunately, a month into the pandemic, one of the women tested positive for the virus.

Soon after, 11 others did. All of our front line staff tested negative. Healthy residents moved to a nearby hotel so the shelter could be disinfected. Staff tirelessly continued to create positive spaces and distraction through this challenging and stressful time.

When it was safe to return to the shelter, only some women and their children moved back; others continued to live at the hotel. On any given day, every bed is full and our space is too small for our needs—after all, it was designed for 16 beds. A pandemic specialist determined there simply wasn't enough space in our building to safely practice physical distancing. Our front line staff continued to work in both spaces to make sure we could continue to provide support to the women and their children at Nellie's and in the hotel.

"The women and children who come to Nellie's learn, gain support, find friends and build confidence," says Maureen. "We're there for them every step of the way as they work towards the next chapter in their lives."



Maureen Caines-Comrie

Because of you, we met a lack of space with a bold vision for the future

Since 1973, Nellie's has sheltered women and children in a beautiful residential building. But this space was designed for just 16 beds. Today, 36 women and children reside within the same 8,900 sq. ft. space. They share a total of 9 bedrooms, 5 toilets, 4 showers, and 1 bathtub.

For nearly a decade, we have been searching for a new building. Former Executive Director Margarita Mendez and our board of directors had a vision of finding a new space that offered greater accessibility and greater privacy for residents.

In July 2019, the Ontario Government announced a significant capital investment to Nellie's, making it possible for us to begin the process of moving to the new building.

"Women and children must live free from violence," Jill Dunlop, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues, said at the announcement.

When we move in 2021, we'll have a 21,800 sq. ft. shelter with an increased ability to implement health and safety measures during this pandemic and any future health crises.

The new Nellie's shelter will retain the charm, comforts, and homey feeling of our current building. It will have private rooms equipped with individual washrooms, (some of which will be fully accessible), an elevator, and will be pet friendly.

For the families who live here, Nellie's is more than a shelter—it's their home.

New shelter highlights



Bedrooms: 22 bedrooms means greater privacy for residents, plus easier physical distancing.

Intake & reception: Our bright and welcoming reception area will help ease anxieties for newcomers to the shelter.

Kitchens: There will be a commercial kitchen, a client kitchen, and 2 kitchenettes.

Bathrooms: The sleeping area will have 20 bathrooms (4 of which will be barrier-free).

Greenspace: A fenced-in yard gives women and their children a safe outdoor space to enjoy.

Kids' area: A dedicated space with multiple rooms to better support children of all ages in their unique healing process.

Because of you, we met our fundraising goals

After experiencing abuse and trauma, many women and their children first come to us seeking nothing but shelter. It is through Nellie's that they learn, gain support, find friends, and build confidence.

We are always forever grateful for the generosity of all our donors near and far, in good times and in challenging times. It's only because of your support 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.

Every person that comes to Nellie's counts on us to be there for them when they need us, and we thank every corporation, foundation, community member, and individual supporter who helped us do just that.

Here are a few inspiring stories from those who supported us in 2019-2020.

Community comes together on the Coldest Night of the Year

Nellie's first Coldest Night of the Year winter walk was more than about raising money. It was about community.

"It was one big community love-in. The energy was infectious, it was just so motivating" says Dana Granofsky, Fund Development Committee Chair and member of Nellie's board of directors. "What our community accomplished in this event was transformational for Nellie's. You just had to be there. Any maybe next year you can!"

Almost 100 people and 45 volunteers took our message to the streets and raised over \$53,000 - 213% of our goal!

All money raised supported our W.E.A.V. program (Women Experiencing Abuse and Violence), which strives to reach the most marginalized women in our community. This program addresses their unique experiences of trauma, substance use, and mental health issues as they work to rebuild their lives.



Corporate support champions women's issues

Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc. first supported Nellie's with a \$20,000 grant in 2018. They generously renewed their support in 2019 and 2020.

"If we're going to champion women internally, we wanted to look at some of the things we could do externally to champion women's issues. That's why we support Nellie's," says Vasie Papadopoulos, Communications and Outreach Manager at Philip Morris International Inc. (Rothmans, Benson & Hedges' parent company).

When the pandemic hit in March, Rothmans generously donated an additional \$25,000 to support relief efforts. This helped cover the costs of hiring more cooks and purchasing additional food so that we could prepare meals daily and encourage everyone to stay inside as much as possible.

"It's important to us to support Nellie's at this very basic level of keeping their operations going," says Vasie.



Vasie Papadopoulos,
Communications & Outreach Manager,
Philip Morris International Inc.

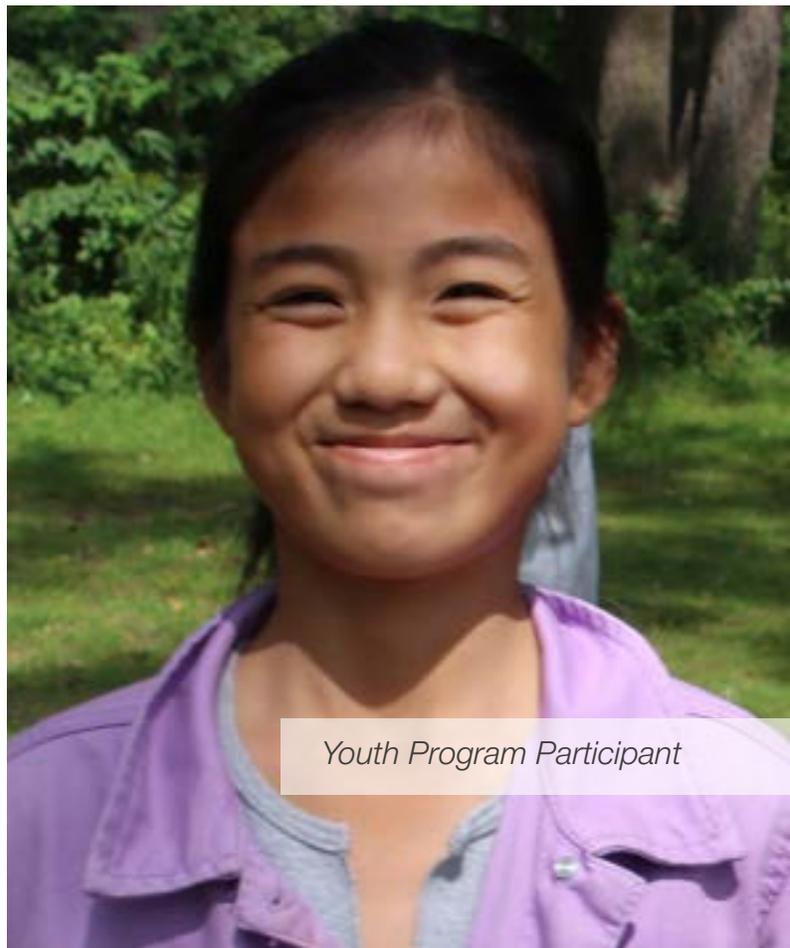
Donors step up to create teen program

Almost one-third of our residents are children, which has resulted in new programs geared specially to their needs. While our children's program uses art and creative interventions to provide a safe space for kids, teens need a different approach.

Teens often witness violence in the home. This year, we directly asked you, our donors, to help fund a Domestic Violence Youth Program to address their trauma in a structured, constructive, and positive way.

"Every donation from our two direct mail campaigns helped to create healing opportunities and hope and strength back into the lives of every individual who walks through our doors," says Ingrid Graham, Director of Development.

Thank you as well to the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation for their \$10,000 grant towards the creation of this program.



Youth Program Participant

Thank you to our Donors

We are extremely grateful to donors like you. With your support vulnerable women and their children have access to shelter, receive vital programs and services, and receive the tools they need to make positive changes in their lives. Please know how grateful we are for all gifts, big and small. Only gifts of \$1,000 and more received between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020 are listed.

\$10,000 plus donors

Sharon Courrier
E W Bickle Foundation
Fidelity Investments Canada ULC
Frederick & Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation
Greater Toronto Apartment Association
La Fondation Emmanuelle Gattuso
Miracle on Ossington
Estate of Marion Aileen Pinkerton
Private Giving Foundation
Project Giggleswater
Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc
The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
Estate of John Alexander Meindl
Tippet Foundation
Plus 1 Anonymous Donor

Mireille Girouz
Keiran Glynn
Goldhart & Associates
Dana Rose Granofsky
Katherine Gurney
Heather Mitchell
Estate of Helen Carol Norma Hendrick
Neil Jones
Elaine Lau
Owen Lawson
Lori Loewen
Oleg Masliy
Patricia McCord
McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited
Lindsay McLeod
Ron Miller
Nell & Natasha Real Estate Homeward Brokerage
Lisa Olay
OMA Chiropractic & Wellness
Vince Oppedisano
P H Palter
Peter Godec Foundation & the Godec Family
Grenville Priest
Theresa Pupulin
David Reed
Refugee Lawyers Assoc of Ontario
Barbara Ritchie
Margot L. Ritchie
Medora Roe
David & Liat Ross
Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
Royal LePage Signature Realty
Barbara Saipe
Sash & Bustle
Scouts Honour Inc
Senang Investments Ltd
Donnalea Sparling
Swedish Women's Christmas Bazaar
HeartStrong Tattoo
The Dawson Family Sharing Foundation
The McLean Foundation
Carol Vine
Jane Wilson
David Wolff
Patricia Younger
Dale Yuka
Moses Znaimer
Zucca Trattoria
Plus 2 Anonymous Donors

\$5,000 - \$9,999 donors

A Gray
Estate of Vera Jacyk
Brian Jardine
Julia Macbain
Mejuri
Mirza Family
Ontario Realtors Care Foundation
Cindy Ricci
Edward J Richardson
Sisters of St Joseph of Toronto
Ram Sundaram
Thomas von Hahn
Plus 2 Anonymous Donors

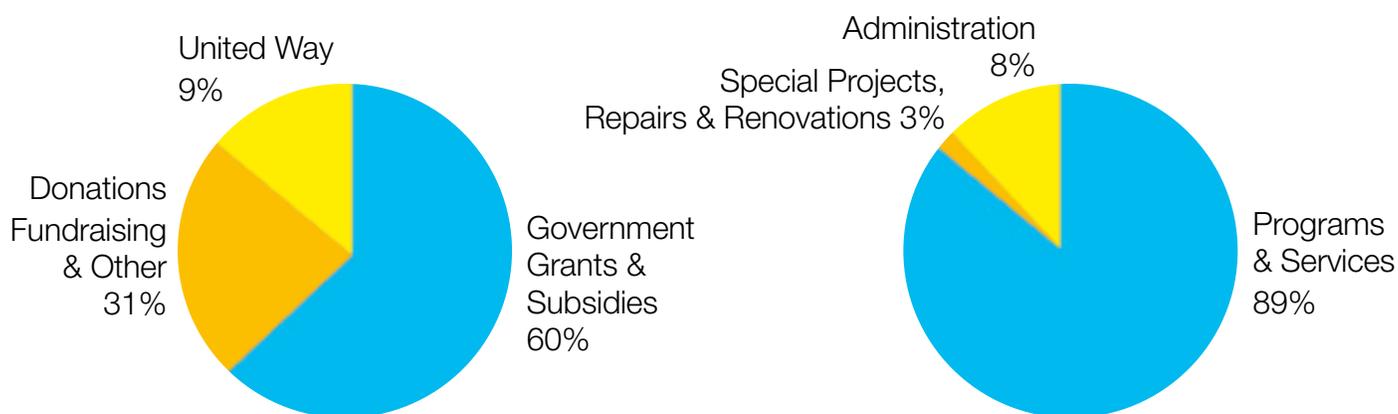
\$1,000 - \$4,999 donors

Altis HR
Lorna & William Anderson
Douglas Bradley & Mary Killoran
Vincenta Cheng
CHUM Charitable Foundation
Collectif Nude Inc
Victoria Cowan
Dianne Davis
Department of Justice Canada
Robert Farmer
Frankland Community Public School (Social Justice Club)

Financial Statement

Statement of Operations
Year End March 31, 2020

REVENUE	2020	2019
Government grants	1,319,079	1,488,366
City of Toronto - per diem	230,590	229,582
City of Toronto - personal needs allowance	16,855	24,402
City of Toronto - Investing in Neighbourhoods	49,740	58,085
United Way Funding	231,787	231,787
Donations and Fundraising	704,198	574,990
Bequests	96,342	181,599
Interest and other	31,695	69,976
	2,680,286	2,858,787
EXPENSES (Schedule A)		
Programs & Services	2,266,531	2,248,237
Administration	206,051	164,046
Special Projects/ One-time Expenses	79,647	78,708
	2,552,229	2,490,991
Excess of revenue over expenses from operations	128,057	367,796
Amortization of capital assets	(32,940)	(49,033)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses from capital assets	(32,940)	(49,033)
Funds received for Mary Prichard Fund	80	1,040
Outlays for Mary Prichard Fund	-	(1,930)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses for Mary Prichard Fund	80	(890)
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	95,197	317,873



Board, volunteers & staff 2019 - 2020

Board of Directors

Executive

Donna Kellway, Co-Chair
Sherece Taffe, Co-Chair
Bethany Johnson, Secretary
Donnalea Sparling, Treasurer

Members at Large

Joanna Fong
Dana Granofsky
Suzanne Johnson
Charrissa Klander
Erin Pollon
Dale Yurka



Meet Charrissa Klander

“I think that every woman and child deserves to feel safe and live a life free of violence and be treated with dignity and kindness.”

Charrissa Klander, who joined Nellie’s Board of Directors in September 2019, brings her expertise as a government relations consultant in guiding Nellie’s towards securing additional funding. Married with three kids, her work with Nellie’s brings her full circle in her career as, early on, she worked as a Child and Youth Worker in a number of treatment settings.

“Nellie’s is an organization that is committed to achieving social justice for women and children and I want to be a part of that.”



Staff

Administration

Halima Abdela, Finance Administrator
Oluwagbemiyi Adeyemi, Relief Admin. Assistant
Wendy Bray, Senior Development Officer
Janna Cheng-Brown, Admin Coordinator
Teresa Christian, Relief Admin. Assistant
Maureen Caines-Comrie, Shelter Manager
Jamuna Gurung, House Coordinator
Ingrid Graham, Director of Development
Tamara Nickie, Admin/Office Support Worker
Joyti Singh, Executive Director
Helen Stalker, Development Admin. Support Worker

Relief Workers

Khadija Abdi
Victoria Bay
Priscilla Boateng
Sharmone Jones
Lillian Manger
Patience McCabe
Maria Moutsatsos
Jean Niravong
Julia Nieri
Amanda Mokgwathi
Alisha Riley
Julia Steinecke *
Karen Sterling
Melisse Watson
Cordelia Whalley-Fox
Kathleen Williams-Peddie
Suad Yusuf

*On Leave

Counsellors, Shelter Support Workers, Legal Support Workers & Housing Workers

Hawa Bogor
Lourdes Dijanich
Bernadette Dondo
Angeles Fernandez
Diana Galeano
Hamdi Hussein
Cecelia Paul
Sarah Pynisky
Abida Sherazee
Joanna Shawana
Angela Stephens

Community Volunteers

Michel Alba
Tamyka Bullen
Patricia Chow
Amanda Chrisanthus
Jolene Hoffie
HeFen Li
Melanie Moore
Anita Nathan
Caitlin Smith
Nu Tang

Pictured: Nellie's staff and volunteers



Thank you to Our Community Partners

211
311
416 Community Support for Women
Access Alliance
Across Boundaries
ACTO: Advocacy Centre for Tenants of
Ontario Alternative Housing
Assaulted Women's Helpline
Birkdale Residence
CAPA: Coalition Against Psychiatric Assault/OISE
CERA: Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
CIBC Volunteers
Canadian Mental Health Association
City of Toronto Department of Public Health
Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto
Credit Canada
Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services
Dress For Success
Dress Your Best
East Toronto Community Legal Services
East York East Toronto Family Services
Ernestine's Women's Shelter
FCJ Refugee Centre
Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations
Flemingdon Community Legal Services
Fred Victor
Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area
International Women's Day Toronto
Kids Up Front Foundation
MC15 Language Interpreting
METRAC: The Metropolitan Toronto Action
Committee on Violence Against Women
Mustard Seed
Neighbourhood Legal Services Inc.
New Circles
North York Women's Shelter
OAITH: Ontario Association of Interval and
Transition Houses
Ralph Thornton Community Centre
Riverside BIA
Royal Bank Volunteers
Second Harvest
Sistering Drop-In
South Riverdale Community Health Centre
Springtide Resources
St. John the Compassionate Mission
St. Stephen's Community House
Stolen Sisters & Brothers Awareness Movement
Street Health
Take Back the Night Toronto
The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic
The 519
The Redwood Women's Shelter
The New Mom Project
Times Change Women's Resource Centre
Toronto Rape Crisis Centre
Transition Worker's Housing Committee
Unison Health & Community Service
West Neighbourhood House
WomanACT: The Woman Abuse Council
of Toronto
Women Transitioning to Trades & Employment
Program George Brown College
West End Midwives
Willowdale Community Legal Services
Women's Health in Women's Hands
WoodGreen Community Services
YMCA - Toronto December 6th Fund



Shelter, Education, Advocacy For all women & children

CRISIS:

Tel: 416-461-1084

Email: programs@nellies.org

ADMINISTRATION:

Tel: 416-461-8903

Email: community@nellies.org

COMMUNITY & OUTREACH SUPPORT

Tel: 416-461-3404

Tel: 416-461-2052

FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

Tel: 416-645-1419

Email: fundraising@nellies.org

HOUSING SUPPORT:

Tel: 416-461-0980

Email: tsw@nellies.org

Fax: 416-461-0970

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. BOX 98118

970 Queen St E

Toronto, ON M4M 1J8



www.nellies.org  [@nelliesshelter](https://twitter.com/nelliesshelter)  [nelliesshelter](https://www.facebook.com/nelliesshelter)  [@nellies_shelter](https://www.instagram.com/nellies_shelter)

CHARITABLE NUMBER: 11930 2727 RR0001

