



*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*

## \$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)

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 Saïpe  
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*



# 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
<b>EXPENSES (Schedule A)</b>		
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](mailto:programs@nellies.org)

## **ADMINISTRATION:**

Tel: 416-461-8903

Email: [community@nellies.org](mailto:community@nellies.org)

## **COMMUNITY & OUTREACH SUPPORT**

Tel: 416-461-3404

Tel: 416-461-2052

## **FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS**

Tel: 416-645-1419

Email: [fundraising@nellies.org](mailto:fundraising@nellies.org)

## **HOUSING SUPPORT:**

Tel: 416-461-0980

Email: [tsw@nellies.org](mailto:tsw@nellies.org)

Fax: 416-461-0970

## **MAILING ADDRESS:**

P.O.BOX 98118

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