

nellies.org



Growing Together

2020-2021 **ANNUAL REPORT**



Nellie's

Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children

Message from Executive Director Jyoti Singh



I frequently feel that there's one word that best sums up how we have handled these difficult times: perseverance. Because despite the challenges we've faced during this global pandemic, we have persevered, together, to prove just how resilient Nellie's is.

It's no secret that the instability of the last year has led to an increase in domestic violence in Canada and around the world. With your support, we have worked together every day to make sure that, regardless of the challenges and health and safety changes we faced, we could always welcome women and their children impacted by abuse, trauma and homelessness.

Together, we weathered two COVID-19 outbreaks amongst our residents. While both were unfortunate, everyone recovered and none of our staff tested positive.

And together, we didn't waver in our dedication to our mission when we had to begin operating out of two locations—our shelter and a nearby hotel—because our space was deemed too small to safely practice physical distancing. That didn't stop us from continuing to help empower women through supportive programs and services in both locations, with a focus on positive spaces, therapeutic healing and personal growth. We then pivoted all shelter programs to virtual when provincial lockdowns halted in-person activities.

While we did have to suspend some of our Community Support and Outreach programs, we carried on with our food program. Food banks have seen massive increases in need this past year and, together we continued to fight food insecurity in our community.

By working together, we are nearing the completion of the renovations to the historic building that is our new shelter. Our role in the community continues to be a demanding one and the move will give us room to grow. With 40 beds across 22 bedrooms (and 20 bathrooms), it will mean greater accessibility and greater privacy for residents, as well as an increased ability to implement health and safety measures. It will also mean we will have more dedicated program areas so we can not only meet today's needs, but tomorrow's as well.

Thank you to our staff for dedicating your days to the front lines to support the women and their children who need us; to our volunteers for continuing to selflessly devote your time and energy; to our neighbours and community partners for always welcoming and supporting us; to our Board who has worked tirelessly to guide us through this unprecedented time; and to the women and their children who continue to put their trust in us every day.

Finally, thank you to our community funding partners and to every one of our donors for standing with us and for putting your trust in us as we continue to grow, together.

Jyoti Singh, Executive Director

Message from the Board Chairs



Living through a global pandemic magnified an issue we already knew we had at Nellie's—not enough space—and it made us realize just how much more important our new shelter was going to be to the women and their children who need us.

Just like it takes a village to raise a child, it is taking a village to make the move to our new shelter a reality. What started out as just an idea over a decade ago has grown as we worked together to find the right building, secure a substantial government investment for its purchase and raise the capital needed to complete the renovations. It is taking our entire community, past and present, and the support of so many who put their trust in us, to turn this dream into a reality. And it is taking a partnership with every one of you, our donors; whether you gave a one-figure amount or a six-figure amount, it is all making a difference in helping us grow.

Nellie's expansion isn't just about providing emergency shelter and programs to help empower women and their children, it's also about freeing up the organization to better advocate for them. Our advocacy efforts are one of our greatest strengths, and as the growing burden of our cramped space weighed on us, it became challenging to focus on the bigger picture. Nellie's has always been a leader in the Violence Against Women (VAW) sector, and a larger physical space allows us to expand our efforts and our reach within the community all under one roof.

As our tenure as co-chairs comes to an end, we are grateful to have stood alongside the hard-working, dedicated and caring women of this board. They have endless energy, expertise and empathy, and we are proud to call these women colleagues and friends. We truly believe that we are leaving the future growth of the organization in very capable hands.

Our time at Nellie's has been exciting, challenging and fulfilling; it changed us and we hope, in some small way, we changed the organization for the better. Ideally, one day there will no longer be a need for shelters like Nellie's, and our own efforts will effectively put us out of business. Until then, we must continue to strengthen our expertise and grow our efforts, together.

Donna Kellway, Co-Chair

&

Sherece Taffe, Co-Chair

“Domestic Violence Doesn’t Discriminate, it Can Happen to Anyone”

There’s one TV show that Devi* can never again bring herself to watch. It’s Grey’s Anatomy, because it was on at the time her husband tried to kill her.

Throughout their entire 25-year marriage, he had always been controlling and mentally abusive, never allowing her to be herself and directing every aspect of her life. She tried to leave a number of times but continued to endure by focusing on their two kids and her work. Until the night he came at her with a knife, she didn’t think he’d ever hurt her physically.

He stabbed her multiple times with a long, serrated fillet knife before she managed to escape to a neighbour’s house. She suffered a punctured lung and significant tendon damage on both hands, which she had used to protect herself during the attack. It took her four months and many hours of difficult physiotherapy to physically recover from the attack. She now lives with permanent nerve and tendon limitations in both hands and endures pain in them every day; but she remembers that they saved her life.

“I was inches from dying but I was able to fight him off,” says Devi. “So many women don’t leave because they can’t financially afford to. My story was different because money wasn’t an issue. I couldn’t get away from him because he wouldn’t let me go. If I was still in my marriage today, [the isolation caused by] COVID-19 would be the best time of my ex’s life. [He’d] be able to lock me in under his supervision.”

For women and their children living with abuse, the COVID lockdowns that caused sudden shifts in daily routines, closing of schools and community resources, and limited access to social support systems were similar to what happens after a natural disaster. All have been identified as family violence risk factors. Globally, it’s believed that the first lockdown in Spring 2020 alone led to a 20% increase in domestic violence.



“Domestic violence doesn’t discriminate, it can happen to anyone. From the outside, people looked at us as the perfect family with two great kids. I’m a successful executive and I lived in a big house, and it happened to me.”

More than 10 years have passed since that terrifying night. Devi still struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) but has also learned just how strong she is. She was fortunate to have the financial means to not have to flee to a shelter like Nellie’s, but she hopes her story gives strength to those currently living with domestic violence. She wants to help change the narrative, bring greater awareness to domestic violence and find ways to work with today’s generation of young people so that, together, we can break the chain of violence.

*Name changed to protect privacy

2020/2021 Shelter Stats

Nellie's has a mandate to help all women and their children, regardless of why they are homeless. Each comes to us with different experiences and needs.

36 women fled violence/intimate partner abuse

36 single women arrived at Nellie's

22 families arrived at Nellie's

35 children (ages 0-17) lived at Nellie's

5 babies were born at Nellie's

2020/2021 Transitional Housing Stats

Nellie's Transitional Housing Support Program helps women in our shelter and in our community secure housing, and offers eviction support to help these women stay in their homes.

49 women with children found permanent housing

19 single women found permanent housing

43 women moved to subsidized housing

34 women moved to private market rentals



The Impact of COVID on our Programs

Children living at Nellie's planted a vegetable garden. Women practiced self-care by taking group walks through our neighbourhood. Educational workshops and safe spaces to work through trauma moved online, and when the weather turned cold, the Children's Program moved online too. This was how we continued to help women and their children take steps toward accomplishing the next chapter of their lives.

For 48 years, Nellie's has always been more than a bed, and a global pandemic hasn't changed that.

“For the general public who has never witnessed family violence and the impact of that, it's easy to think a woman can just leave and everything will be okay,” says Jiin Yiong, Program Director. “But in reality, sometimes leaving is the easiest part. It's the rebuilding to be independent that is the hardest part, and that's what our programs help with.”

We weren't, unfortunately, able to pivot our Community Support and Outreach programs as easily as our in-shelter programs. These programs, which provide much-needed support and services, are designed for

women and families living in our community. Because of their drop-in nature, we had to suspend all but one for health and safety reasons. The one that continues to operate is our food program.

“Food security is a priority for us at Nellie's,” says Jiin. “We won't stop it because we know how valuable it is. Food banks have seen such an increase in need this past year.”

Our new shelter has much room for program growth. With more dedicated program spaces, we can run workshops, programming, homework clubs and activities, all designed to help empower women and their children as they carve a new path forward.

“This is a critical point because Nellie's is one of the oldest shelters in Toronto and as we move into our next chapter, it's time to reflect on what is working and what we can do even better. The environment is changing and Nellie's needs to change with it,” says Jiin. “It's exciting to be looking at emerging needs and know that we have the ability to respond to them.”

Life in the Shelter During COVID



Spring 2020

In a year where we were told to stay home, 58 women and their children left their homes to come to Nellie's. Each one fled domestic violence, trauma and homelessness, arriving at Nellie's in the middle of a global pandemic to take the courageous steps toward accomplishing the next chapter in their life.

But life in the shelter has been very different than usual. Kids can't be found bounding down the stairs to our playroom. Moms can't be found in the kitchen making a cup of tea or joining a group program in the living room. Here's a look at what life has been like at Nellie's.

We stepped up cleaning measures, implemented social distancing and handed out PPE. To encourage everyone to stay in as much as possible, we hired additional cooks and introduced more daily prepared meals. Since schools and daycares were closed, we opened our children's playroom to help older kids with online learning and engage younger ones.

Unfortunately, we had a COVID-19 outbreak, with 11 residents testing positive. All of our front-line staff tested negative. Everyone moved into a city quarantine centre or a nearby hotel while the shelter was thoroughly disinfected.

Summer 2020

A pandemic specialist determined that it wasn't safe for everyone to return to the shelter—there simply wasn't enough space to safely physical distance. We began housing women and their children in two locations—the shelter and the hotel—where supportive programs ran in both locations.

Fall 2020

We settled into a routine over the fall as most days played out similar to those in the summer. Because of distancing protocols, instead of 36 women and their children sharing the nine bedrooms in our shelter, only family units filled our rooms. In the hotel, we had up to nine rooms available to us.

Winter 2021

The second, and then third, provincial lockdown forced us to halt in-person programs and close common areas in the shelter. Unless heading outside for fresh air and exercise, residents were asked to stay in their rooms and avoid contact with others. Meals were taken in their rooms and programs went virtual. With schools closed, school-aged children attended virtually from the room they shared with their mother.

Welcome to the New Nellie's!

Two years ago, we purchased the Victorian building that is our new shelter. Since then, it underwent significant renovations, including improving accessibility, repairing the historic brickwork, restoring windows, upgrading plumbing, installing an HVAC system and upgrading the interior.

(Left-Right) Board Members: Joanne Fong, Lindsey Walton, Donna Kellway and Dana Granofsky, and Executive Director Jyoti Singh



“The building has old world charm with a modern contemporary twist,” says Executive Director Jyoti Singh, explaining that the Victorian building has an attached newer addition. On each floor, splashes of colour help make the space feel warm and welcoming. “For a woman fleeing violence, there’s something about these old Victorian homes that feels cozy.”



First Floor

Beautiful wood arches frame the front entrance hall with a stunning staircase that leads upstairs. There’s a welcoming reception office, a large dining room for communal meals, an industrial kitchen with a smaller, fully accessible kitchen behind it, and a living room. Down the hall, there are staff offices and a number of bedrooms, each with their own washroom. An elevator goes from the basement to the second floor.

Second Floor

The bedrooms, each with their own washroom, are furnished with beds, a dresser and finishing touches, such as blinds without cords to keep kids safe. Each door is numbered and labelled in braille. A common kitchenette provides space to make a quick snack or warm up a baby bottle, and two offices are dedicated for counselling sessions.

Third Floor

Dedicated spaces for our housing workers, legal worker, and children’s worker, as well as youth areas for our Children and Youth Programs. There is also a computer room, a program room, a meeting space for women who need private meetings and a spiritual room where women can retreat to reflect or pray.

Basement

Our Community Support and Outreach offices, administration offices and staff room are located on this level. There’s also a dedicated area for programming with a kitchenette for snack prep, a laundry room for residents, and a pet care space for cleaning and grooming.

Backyard

A children’s play area behind the building will hopefully one day have a playground. As our shelter is pet friendly, there is also a small, fenced-in area for dogs.

Thank You to our Donors

We are always forever grateful for the generosity of all of our donors. It's because of you that we have been able to always welcome women and their children impacted by abuse, trauma and homelessness as they take the steps toward accomplishing the next chapter of their lives, while at the same time work to complete the renovations on our new shelter, which gives us the space to meet the growing and changing needs of those who need us.

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

Here are a few inspiring stories from those who supported us in 2020/2021.



PetSmart Charities® of Canada Helps us Shelter Women and Their Children...and Their Pets

Imagine how difficult it would be to leave an abusive partner, with nowhere but a shelter to turn to for support. Now try to imagine how much harder that would be if doing so also meant leaving behind your cherished pet, your one reliable source of emotional support and unconditional love.

A generous \$50,000 grant from PetSmart Charities of Canada helped us create a pet-friendly co-sheltering area in our new shelter.

“Companion animals are just as deserving of protection from abuse,” says Dani LaGiglia, Community Grants Manager, PetSmart Charities of Canada. “Because there are few resources available for domestic violence victims and their pets, they are often locked in a cycle of abuse in order to keep their loved ones safe. We are pleased to support Nellie’s so that more pet parents don’t have to make a choice between their safety and that of a beloved pet.”



Virtual Events and Digital Fundraisers Support Nellie’s

After raising over \$8,000 for Nellie’s in May with a virtual workout fundraiser, local gym One Academy decided to do it again before the holiday rush. With an instructor running a class from their closed east-end gym, and hundreds of people joining online from all over the world, One Academy raised another \$11,000+ in support of Nellie’s.

Thank you also to the many other organizations that held virtual fundraisers for Nellie’s, including Royal LePage Estate Realty, King Ursa, Women@Thomson Reuters, WSTEM TO (Women in STEM Toronto), the Toronto East Rotary Club, and BNI Lunch Network for Success.

Volunteer Brings Holiday Cheer

Restrictions on social gatherings didn’t deter long-time volunteer Peggy Capitain from wanting to give back to Nellie’s over the holiday season. For the last decade, Peggy has organized Nellie’s holiday party—an afternoon filled with music, food, laughter and a visit from Santa for over 200 families in our community. This year, she fundraised to provide a nice holiday meal for shelter residents and rallied her network to collect gifts as well as winter necessities.



“The pandemic makes everything so much harder for Nellie’s,” says Peggy. “It was really important to me to continue the tradition, even if it’s in a different way.”



Dedicated Donors Support COVID Relief

We can’t say thank you enough for this thoughtful support.

Long-time donors **Rothman, Bensen and Hedges, Inc.** increased their annual gift

The **Tippet Foundation** increased their annual gift to include dedicated COVID relief funding

Fidelity Investment increased their annual gift which supported families over the holidays and COVID relief

The **Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation** graciously sent their contribution early to help ease increased program costs for children and youth programs

A number of new donors also helped us continue to thrive, including:

- Lewis & Ruth Sherman Foundation
- Algonquin Capital
- Frischkorn Family Foundation
- JBS Foundation
- Industrial Alliance Insurance & Financial Services

Finally, a big thank you to every one of our loyal monthly donors. Your generous support sustained our general operating fund.

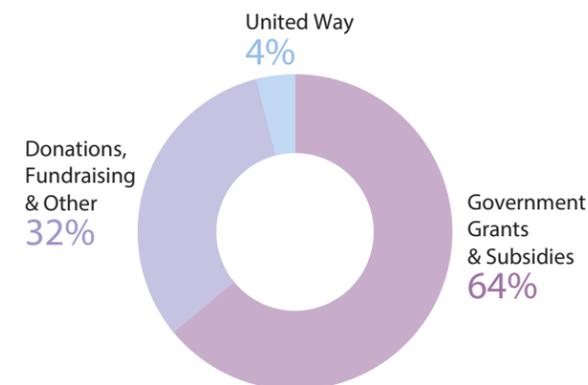
Financial Report Year End March 31, 2021

REVENUE	2021	2020
Government grants	\$1,460,434	\$1,319,079
MCCSS one-time pandemic relief funding	941,628	-
City of Toronto – per diem	226,116	230,590
City of Toronto – personal needs allowance	20,261	16,855
City of Toronto – other employment supports	30,435	49,740
United Way funding	180,719	231,787
Donations and fundraising	1,371,039	704,198
Bequests	35,880	96,342
Interest and other	1,148	31,695
	\$4,267,660	\$2,680,286

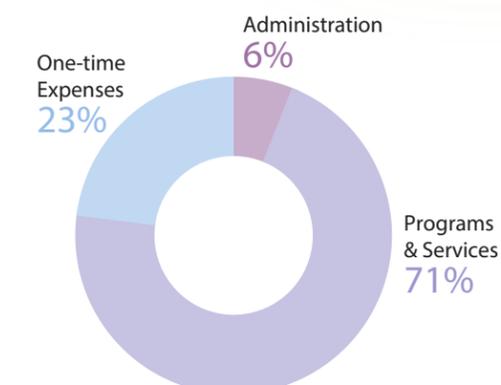
EXPENSES (Schedule A of our Audited Financial Report)	2021	2020
Property	\$238,914	\$214,527
Administration	199,418	206,051
Staffing	1,924,683	1,840,261
Clients	165,033	211,743
One-time expenses including accommodation	743,204	79,647
	\$3,271,252	\$2,552,229

Excess of revenue over expenses from operations	996,408	128,057
Amortization of capital assets	(17,042)	(32,940)
Deficiency of revenue over expenses from capital assets	(17,042)	(32,940)
Funds received from Mary Prichard Fund	-	80
Outlays for Mary Prichard Fund	(1,040)	-
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses for Mary Prichard Fund	(1,040)	80
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$978,326	\$95,197

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Board of Directors

Executive

Donna Kellway,
Co-Chair

Sherece Taffe,
Co-Chair

Erin Pollon,
Secretary

Donnalea Sparling,
Treasurer

Board Members at Large

Joanna Fong

Dana Granofsky

Suzanne Johnson

Charrissa Klander

Lindsey Walton

Dale Yurka

Community Volunteers

Michele Alba

Tamyka Bullen

Patricia Chow

Amanda Chrisanthus

HeFen Li

Melanie Moore

Anita Nathan

Caitlin Smith

Nu Tang

Staff Listings

Administrative Staff

Halima Abdela,
Finance Administrator

Oluwagbeminiyi Adeyemi,
Fund Development Admin Assistant

Janna Cheng-Brown,
Admin Coordinator

Maureen Caines-Comrie,
Shelter Manager

Jamuna Gurung,
House Coordinator

Ingrid Graham,
Director of Development

Tamara Nickie, Admin/
Office Support Worker

Jyoti Singh,
Executive Director

Jiin Yiong,
Program Director

Shelter & Transitional Housing Workers

Hawa Bogor

Lourdes Dijanich

Bernadette Dondo

Angeles Fernandez

Diana Galeano

Hamdi Hussein

Cecelia Paul

Joanna Shawana

Abida Sherazee

Angela Stephens

Relief Workers

Khadija Abdi

Deisy Adudelo

Victoria Bay

Priscilla Boateng

Naila Chandoo

Sharmone Jones

Lillian Manger

Patience McCabe

Amanda Mokgwathi

Maria Moutsatsos

Julia Nieri

Mafo Njolomba

Amanda Parke

Alisha Riley

Mahi Shah

Karen Sterling

Melisse Watson

Cordelia Whalley-Fox

Kathleen Williams-Peddie

Suad Yusuf

Sonila Zesliari

Service Recognition

Volunteers with 5+ Years of Service

Tamyka Bullen

Patricia Chow

Joanne Fong

Bethany Johnson

Donna Kellway

Melanie Moore

Sherece Taffe

Nu Tang

Staff with 10+ Years of Service

Khadija Abdi

Victoria Bay

Priscilla Boateng

Hawa Bogor

Maureen Caines-Comrie

Bernadette Dondo

Angeles Fernandez

Janna Cheng-Brown

Diana Galeano

Hamdi Hussein

Lilian Manger

Patience McCabe

Margarita Mendez

Maria Moustatsos

Tamara Nickie

Julia Nieri

Cecelia Paul

Joanna Shawana

Abida Sherazee

Julia Steinecke

Angela Stephens

Karen Sterling

Kathleen Williams-Peddie

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
Gerstein's
Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area
International Women's Day Toronto
Kids Up Front Foundation
MC1S Language Interpreting
METRAC: The Metropolitan Toronto Action Committee on Violence Against Women
Michael Garron Hospital
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
Second Harvest Sistering Drop-In
South Riverdale Community Health Centre
St. John the Compassionate Mission
St. Michael's Hospital
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
Victim Services
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



Thank You,
Joanne Fong,
for Serving on
Nellie's Board

Once a year, Joanne Fong would call and thank some of our donors. One year, a name on her list was that of a woman who gave just \$5 a month.

The woman explained that spousal abuse is common in her culture, and when she chose to leave with her sons, her own family wouldn't support her so she came to Nellie's. "That was the moment when I realized it is one thing to know the privilege I have, but it's another thing to hear about someone's terrible circumstances and know that, because of Nellie's, they turned their life around from one of fear, abuse and shame, to one where they are thriving."

A board member since 2015, Joanne's three-term maximum tenure has come to an end. She's enjoyed the opportunity to use her professional experience to serve on Nellie's board in a governance capacity. She and her fellow board members have looked years down the line to ensure the organizational structure is in place so staff can meet today's needs, and continue to meet evolving and increasing complex needs of tomorrow.

"I hope that the new members coming in feel as enriched by the experience as I have been and feel that the work they do truly makes a difference."

CRISIS

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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

Fax: 416-461-0970

Email: tsw@nellies.org

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11930 2727 RR0001



Nellie's

Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children