

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue shirt, is sitting on the grass and smiling. She is holding a young girl with curly brown hair, wearing a floral dress and pink leggings. The girl is holding a brown leaf up to the light. The background is a blurred green field with trees.

Your Impact Report

January 2017



**Shelter, Education & Advocacy
for all women and children**

**“For all you do,
I thank each and
every one of you
from the bottom
of my heart!”**



– Margarita Mendez, Executive Director

Facing a brand new year is always both exciting and a little overwhelming! You know from experience the months ahead will present opportunities for renewed growth and achievement to move Nellie's forward, hand-in-hand with serious challenges that will call for immediate or longer-term action. However, whatever lies ahead, we can face it with confidence, knowing we have strong support to back us up.

The fact that last year we accomplished so much in so many areas of our community - ranging from providing the day-to-day necessities of life for women and children experiencing oppression, to enabling access to outreach programs and services designed to foster learning and support – is a testament to the efficiency and effectiveness of our integral human 'engine'. This 'engine' that powers Nellie's is actually a tightly-knit, three-pronged network of committed and dedicated individuals who comprise of staff and a supportive volunteer force and donors.

I am confident the persistent diligence and enthusiasm of our Board of Directors, coupled with the ongoing dedication and hard work of our talented staff, all supported by a committed army of donors, will carry us into the year ahead as we rise to the challenges of making 2017 another year of progress and achievement.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

- With your support last year our crisis line **responded to 1,182 calls**.
- Last year you helped **provide shelter to 83 women and 35 children living** at Nellie's for an average of 6 months.
- Thanks to you, **38,268 meals and 1,560 snacks were served** to women living at the Shelter.
- You helped our Food Program provide **80 families (each week) with meals** and groceries.
- Thanks to you, services were provided to **140 Pre-school aged children, 255 school age children, 310 youth (12-24), 408 adults, and 266 seniors**.

Lives are changed because of donors like you.

At about five or six years of age our parents separated and our mother became our primary caregiver. We bounced around for a while staying with various relatives when we could: however, a lot of times they did not want to take on the burden of having our mother and her three children staying with them when they had their own families to take care of.

I can remember the night we arrived at Nellie's. I don't recall the date or even the month, but I remember it was cold out. Our mother had called a number of relatives to see if we could stay with them, but they all refused. We were walking the streets at night with nowhere to go. My brothers and I, just being young kids, had no idea of the dire situation we were in. Looking back now though, it breaks my heart to think of my mother in this situation with three young children. I remember we stopped at a pay phone and she made a call. Later that night we arrived at Nellie's.

I remember how kind and caring the staff was, and our fellow residents as well. My brothers and I were fed, clothed and taken care of. Nellie's felt like home to us and we were happy there. I remember a room downstairs that was full of used and donated clothing. We spent hours down there jumping around and playing in this huge pile of clothing. Next to this room was the TV room, another area that occupied a lot of our time.

I can remember one evening my brothers and me were in the TV room watching Pee Wee Herman. Another resident came in and turned the channel to the Olympics. We sure were angry and proceeded straight to the office to voice our complaint with one of the women working there. She did her best to make us feel better. Another time our younger brother, who would have been about two years old at



Constables Jayme and Terry Prevost

the time, took our mother's clock radio and tossed it out the window, breaking it. We took the broken radio to a lady who was working in the office and asked her if she could fix it for us. She retrieved a few tools and spent a considerable amount of time trying to fix this clock radio for us. I will always remember how kind and patient she was.

Over the next couple of years, we bounced around to different shelters including The Red Door, The Robinson House, The Spadina House, and Women in Transition. We did a few stints at Nellie's.

"I don't want to sound overly dramatic, but I can truly say that things may have turned out a lot differently for us had it not been for places like Nellie's."

– Terry Prevost

Throughout this, my brothers and I always had a close and loving relationship which still exists today. There is no doubt in my mind that this is what carried us through the tough times.

When we were about seven we were able to leave the shelter system and move into an apartment with the help of social assistance from the government.

We grew up with mostly other kids from single parent families. A number of them wound up on welfare themselves and with lengthy criminal records. We had a loving mother who made it clear to us from an early age that she did not want that type of life for us. She encouraged us to stay in school

and to always stick together and be there for each other. Somehow, despite the negative influences all around, we all stuck together and managed to stay on the straight and narrow path.

Jayme and I graduated high school together and were the first members of our family to pursue post-secondary education.

In 2007 we both joined the Toronto Police Service where we still serve today.

We are both married and have children of our own. I often have to remind my daughter, who is six, of what my childhood was like when she starts complaining about how hard hers is because she can't have a certain toy or go on a certain vacation.

I don't want to sound overly dramatic, but I can truly say that things may have turned out a lot differently for us had it not been for places like Nellie's.

THANKS TO TERRY, JAYME, THEIR FAMILIES AND COLLEAGUES FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATION OF TOYS TO THE CHILDREN OF NELLIE'S

Your support has enabled Nellie's to provide programs and services in the community to meet a variety of needs

Supper Surprise Program

Each week, fresh, pre-cooked and non-perishable food donations from Second Harvest and community donors like you are packed up and distributed to approximately 80 families by a group of committed volunteers. Attendance at this program increases every year, while donations remain steady. For families experiencing food insecurity the program helps with their ability to cover basic needs and emergency expenses without going hungry.



Transitional Housing Support

Access to safe and affordable housing is essential for women and children who have fled violence. With your support Nellie's offers safety planning and crisis support and connect women and children to the community resources they may need after they leave the shelter.



Women and Accessibility Support Group

Alarmingly, women with disabilities experience abuse at 10 times the rate of able-bodied women and the abuse lasts longer. There is less accessible shelter space for women with disabilities. With support from our donors Nellie's established the Women and Accessibility support group, a social, educational and psychological Support Group for Women with Physical Disabilities who have experienced abuse and violence.

Kids Summer Program

Each summer Nellie's runs a free day camp, five days a week, for kids aged 6 to 14 from low income households in the community as well as those living at our shelter. Your support has enabled kids to go on day-trips to the zoo, museum, have movie days, and enjoy arts and crafts.





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.





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