



Your Impact Report

2020



Nellie's

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

“Thank you! Your support means we can be so much more than a bed”

– Margarita Mendez, Executive Director

For many of us, the new decade brings promises of new growth and new achievements. And at Nellie's, we've been working tirelessly to bring those same opportunities to the women and children who come to us and want to take the brave steps towards accomplishing the next chapter in their lives.

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

Government funding ensures a roof over our heads, beds to sleep in and other essentials. And that funding is a big part of what is making the renovation and move to our new shelter possible. But the truth is that Nellie's must be so much more than a bed. The More than a Bed Report, released last year by Women's Shelters Canada, found that Violence Against Women shelters across the country are actively engaging in prevention and awareness-raising work to end violence against women and children, yet one-third of shelters do not receive funding from their main funder to do so.

It is the generosity of you, our donors near and far, that allows us to provide the essential outreach programs and services that foster learning and support. Your continued and unwavering support ensures that we are able to tailor our responses and adapt our programs to meet the changing and complex needs of those in our shelter as well as those in our community.

Your donations help women like Olivia, who you'll read about in this report, find or maintain their housing, navigate social services, access health care and much more through our Community Support and Outreach office. And your kindness also means we've been able to meet a woman's immediate needs as quickly as possible when she arrives at our shelter (such as finding her a warm meal, clean clothes or toiletries for the night) while also adding programs such as safety planning, violence against women workshops, and structured programs for the children and teens living at Nellie's to help them work through the trauma they've experienced in an age-appropriate way.

Back in 2006, when I took on the position of Executive Director of Nellie's, I had a dream to move the shelter into a new space and build our capacity and supportive services. As I prepare to retire from work in 2020 and look forward to spending more time with my grandchildren, I welcome Jyoti Singh as the new Executive Director of our organization and I do so knowing that both of my dreams have become a reality for the women and their children living at Nellie's.

I am confident that the persistent diligence and enthusiasm of our Board of Directors, the dedication of our staff and volunteers who create a caring and supportive environment every day, and the support of our generous donors will ensure that Nellie's will continue to rise to every challenge in the coming year. I truly believe that only great things are ahead for Nellie's.

Thank you for your continued trust and support and for all that you do!



YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

The women and children who come to Nellie's 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 generosity.

Last year, we:

- **Provided shelter and supportive services to 133 women and 46 children.**
- **Funded transitional housing workers that secured housing to over 70 women, keeping them safe from harm.**
- **Provided 200 women and their children with a memorable holiday celebration, which for many was their only holiday celebration, complete with Santa bearing gifts for all.**
- **Improved the health of women and children living in our shelter through Nellie's Additional Needs program that provides emergency funds for women and children who don't have coverage for medical services or prescriptions.**



Welcoming our new Executive Director

Nellie's Board of Directors, along with the Management team and staff of Nellie's, are pleased to welcome Jyoti Singh as Executive Director. Jyoti has dedicated her career to assisting women experiencing homelessness, violence, and a myriad of other challenges and oppressions in Toronto and in cities across the country.

Jyoti has more than 12 years of experience providing leadership in community-based programming and policy administration with a focus on working with disadvantaged populations. Most recently, she was Executive Director of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba. Previously she held managerial roles with End Homelessness Winnipeg and Women's Residence in Toronto.

We look forward to the leadership, guidance and compassion Jyoti will bring to Nellie's and the women and children in our community.

*Donna Kellway and Sherece Taffe,
Co-Chairs, Nellie's Board of Directors*

“Nellie’s always shows me the way”

Olivia never lived at Nellie’s shelter. She never spent a night in one of our beds, cooked dinner in our kitchen, or found a few hours to herself while her daughter joined the Children’s Program. But Olivia 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 their 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).”



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– Olivia

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.

For Olivia and Grace, the first and most important step was to find them a new home.

“When a woman shows up, our goal is to find them housing either in the primary market or the subsidized market,” says Diana, a Transitional Support Worker at Nellie’s.

“Every single client we work with is different. We work with each one

of them as individuals with unique needs. My goal for my clients is to search for the services and programs around them and guide them to success. Everyone's goal is different and I help them achieve their goals."

Six months after Olivia and Grace arrived at the family shelter, with Diana's help 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 and has helped her create a wish list for the Gifts-in-Kind Holiday Program, a partnership where employees at a number of companies sponsor individual families and purchase wish list items for them.

"I've been fighting for myself and to support myself for so many years," says Olivia, as Danielle, now 3, plays with a new colouring toy from a generous Nellie's donor. Olivia explains that she arrived in Canada from Guyana as a child with her mother and older brother. But her mother passed away when she was in middle school and her brother was left to care for her, leaving her to mostly care for herself.

"Until now, everybody in my life just passed through for a few weeks or months and then it would all collapse again. But Diana and Nellie's have 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. Nellie's is always showing me that when the first option doesn't work out, there's a second and third and fourth option to try," she says.

"Now I have a ground to stand on and a solid foundation. And I am so grateful. Nellie's has done so much for my family and I just can't say thank you enough."

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– Olivia

Olivia, her daughter, Danielle, and Diana Galeano



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

Nellie's is so much more than a bed and for women like Olivia, we're also a place they can turn to for services and support. We stand alongside them as they navigate the legal system, immigration services, social services, child protections services, health care and more. And, we offer counselling, children's programming, safety planning, outreach services, violence against women workshops and more. Thanks to donors like you, we can be more than a shelter, we can help women and their children take the courageous steps towards accomplishing the next chapter of their lives. These are just some of the many programs that are available to the women and children both living at Nellie's and through our Community Support and Outreach office.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

Like Olivia, many of the women who turn to Nellie's for support are homeless or facing eviction. And 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. This support may be 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.

DOMESTIC YOUTH VIOLENCE PROGRAM

While the children living at Nellie's can access our Children's Program for a safe space for kids to express their thoughts and feelings, a different approach is needed for teens to deal with their trauma. Our Domestic Youth Violence Program works with teens in a structured, constructive, and positive way. Many have witnessed violence in the home, which can lead to challenging behaviours, such as repeating violence, and escalating mother-child conflicts. As well, adolescents who suffered trauma are at risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, and substance abuse. Our program purposefully addresses these issues in an effort to stop the cycle of violence.

WOMEN EXPERIENCING ABUSE AND VIOLENCE (W.E.A.V.)

Nurturing women to develop confidence and self-esteem helps support their transition out of poverty while honouring their histories of violence and abuse. For 20 weeks, our Women Experiencing Abuse and Violence (W.E.A.V.) Program helps women in our shelter and in our community develop self-care strategies, and explore the impact of their trauma and how it affects their day-to-day lives mentally and physically. W.E.A.V. also helps women learn to set healthy boundaries and supports them as they move towards economic independence by building their interview skills, offering resume guidance, and honing their computer and technology abilities.

GIFTS-IN-KIND

The needs of the women and children who come to Nellie's are continually changing. Our Gifts-in-Kind Program allows us to provide more than just the essential items, such as new clothing, underwear and basic toiletries, it means we can also help those in our shelter and in our community celebrate holidays and special occasions. Last year, dozens of gift cards for small luxuries, such as to fast food restaurants, movie theatres and stores, were given out. These cards mean a woman can buy small gifts for herself or her children. And, we held a memorable holiday party, complete with Santa bearing gifts for all, during a time of year that is often difficult for marginalized families.

Take a look inside our new shelter

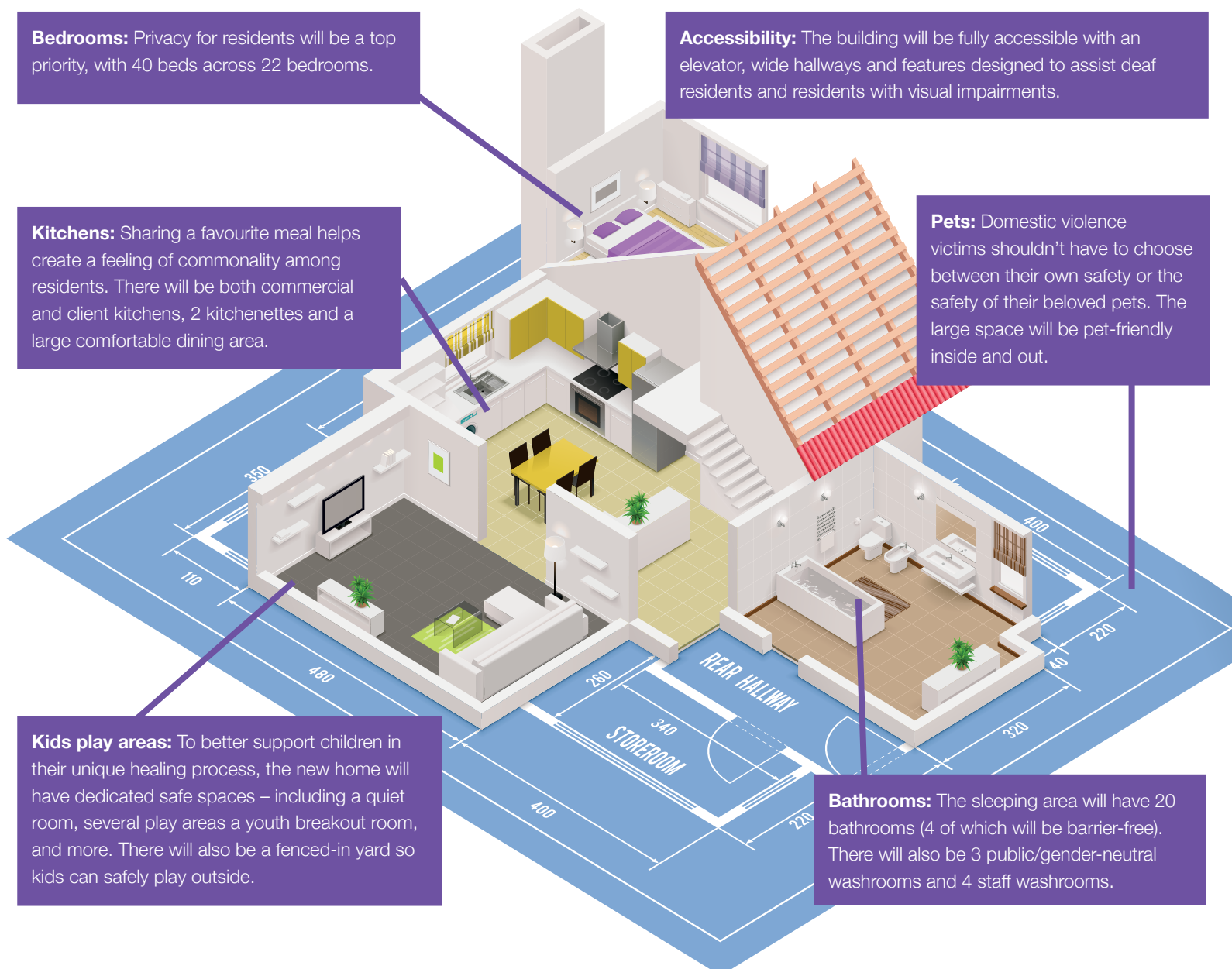
Take a look inside our new shelter

Since 1973, Nellie's has sheltered women and children in a beautiful residential building. But this space was designed for just 16 beds. Today, 40 women and children reside within the same 8,900 sq. ft. footprint. They share a total of 9 bedrooms, 5 toilets, 4 showers and 1 bathtub.

In 2021, we will finally be moving to a newly renovated, fully accessible home nearby that meets our growing needs.

For the families who live here, Nellie's is more than a shelter – it's their home. Because of you, our residents will feel more comfortable and relaxed in their new surroundings, and Nellie's new shelter will be able to better meet their needs.

Thank you for your support.



Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children

Thank
you



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