



YOUR IMPACT REPORT

2024



nellies.org

Thanks to your support, we're so much more than a shelter



More than 50 years ago, a group of women activists realized that there were only 40 beds available for homeless women in all of Toronto, yet there were over 400 beds for homeless men. Moved to action by this inequity, Nellie's was founded in 1973 and became

one of the first women's shelters in the city. Today, most people primarily think of Nellie's as a safe place for women and their children to stay — but thanks to your generous donations, we've continued to grow our circle of support, with an array of programs for women and their children living in our community.

At Nellie's, we believe the key to making a significant impact toward ending gender-based violence is to go beyond crisis work. We must look outside our shelter walls to make real change and disrupt the cycle of violence. Through our Community Support & Outreach programs, we focus on supporting both the physical and mental well-being of our community members. Our strong reputation and seasoned ability to create partnerships allow us to go into areas where there's a gap in services and make sure people are getting the support and information they need to remain safe.

One of the main service gaps we focus on is food insecurity. Across Toronto, one in 10 people are currently relying on food banks. Our own food program is now supporting 120 women and their families every week, and we hope the recent move to a bigger location will allow us to serve even more. The need keeps growing — in fact, it's been so great during the last few years that we never closed the doors to our food program, despite having to temporarily suspend many of our community programs due to the pandemic.

Throughout this report, you'll learn more about all of our Community Support & Outreach (CSO) programs, including Senior Socialization, which provides vital engagement for older clients; Women on the Move for women with disabilities; Women Ending Abuse and Violence (WEAV), which focuses on teaching women about healthy dating and relationships; and, of course, our food program. You'll also read about Amanda Nobile, our CSO program coordinator, who runs three to five programs every week, and is constantly coming up with new ways to meet the needs of our clients.

While Nellie's has always been active in our community, I'm incredibly proud of how we've continued to grow these critical services. When I first came to Nellie's, I used to say that the shelter was the heart of our organization — today, I actually think the whole organization is a heart, and the shelter is just one chamber. Your donations allow us to provide holistic support to the women and their children both in our shelter and in our community. Because of you, Nellie's is so much more than a bed.

I am so grateful for your continued support and trust. You make everything we do possible.

Jyoti Singh, Executive Director



2023 Community Support & Outreach Programs By the Numbers

480 food baskets provided every month by our food program, on average

550 people supported by CSO programs

85 seniors participated in the Senior Socialization program

25 women enrolled in Women on the Move

60 workshop sessions delivered through the Women Ending Abuse and Violence (WEAV) program

105 women participated in WEAV Healthy Dating & Relationships workshops

“I love being in the community and working with my clients”



For Community Support & Outreach (CSO) program coordinator Amanda Nobile, every workday is completely different. Whether she's running our weekly food program for women and their children in our community, leading a healthy relationships workshop at a nearby university or community centre, co-facilitating a craft activity for women with disabilities, or taking a group of seniors on a trip to the aquarium, her goal is to be working directly with clients as much as possible.

“The fuller my wall calendar is, the happier I am, because that means I'm with our clients and that's what makes me the happiest,” says Amanda. “That's why I love this job. I love being in the community and working with my clients. I love getting to know them and getting their feedback to help me figure out what to do next, and how I can make their experience better.”

With three to five different CSO programs running every week, it's no wonder her wall calendar is usually packed. (Thankfully, we were recently able to hire Tugce Alemdar, a CSO support worker, so Amanda isn't stretched too thin.) In addition to program delivery, Amanda has been heavily involved in major initiatives and the expansion of programming over the past year.

In recent months, she orchestrated the relocation of our food program, completed in January 2024. “That's a really big project that's been in the works for a while, so we're really excited about

that finally happening,” explains Amanda. “The new space feels like such an amazing, welcoming environment, and we're hoping to be able to upgrade the food program now that we have a place that has more space. We really want to make the food program an even better experience for our clients.”

Earlier in the year, Amanda also spearheaded a new program (Senior Socialization), developed a new workshop (Healthy Dating & Relationships), and revived a program that had been shut down since the start of the pandemic (Women on the Move). (You can learn more about these programs on pages 6-7.)

Amanda constantly welcomes feedback and makes changes to programs based on client recommendations, and this has led to a couple of surprising developments over the past year. While the Healthy Dating & Relationships workshops were initially intended for high school and university students, their success has snowballed, with requests



pouring in from other shelters and community centres, for women of all ages. “This program has had a lot of different benefits for different people, which surprised me,” says Amanda. “It’s really amazing to see something that you’ve created and where it can go and how it can help different people.”

Another surprise was one of the ways a CSO program resonates with community members. Several clients have told Amanda that they specifically come to the Nellie’s food program because it’s only for women and they feel more comfortable here. “That’s why they continue to come back,” says Amanda. “It feels like a safe space for them, and they don’t feel that at other food programs.”

While juggling so many programs and projects isn’t always easy, Amanda thrives on the variety each day brings — and she’s passionate about helping people. “I do it for the clients. Sometimes it’s stressful, and you’re running around all over the city, and there’s a lot of moving parts,” she explains. “But if I have even just one person tell me that this program was beneficial to them in any way, then it feels like everything was worth it. It just warms my heart.”

Thank you, Amanda, for all of your hard work and dedication to the Nellie’s community!

Our Community Support & Outreach Programs

Through our CSO programs, Nellie's is able to look outside our shelter walls and be a force for change in our community. These core programs allow us to have an even greater impact, providing vital supports that help to disrupt the cycles of violence and homelessness.

How Nellie's is helping to fight food insecurity in Toronto

For over 20 years, the Nellie's food program has been supporting women and their children living in our community. While about 80-85% of our clients are seniors struggling with the cost of living, we also serve single moms trying to make ends meet, women with disabilities who face economic and social exclusion, and other women in need in our community. Some of these women have previously lived in our shelter, but many others simply live in our community and come to us for help.



Every week, 120 families rely on our food program to access a basic human need — that's as much as double the number we were serving just a year prior. And there are another 60 families we could be serving if we had the resources. Our move earlier this year to a new location inside Kimbourn Park United Church provides the space to serve more people, but in order to do so, we'll need to secure additional food donations, and have the people power for client administration, food sorting, and cleaning. Nonetheless, we're up for the challenge, and we're hoping to continue upgrading the food program experience in this new space.

As with most food programs, we depend on donations from our community and agencies. Every Tuesday morning, our friends at Second Harvest — a food rescue charity — deliver fresh, frozen, and packaged foods. From week to week, we fill food baskets with a wide variety of foods, like fresh fruit and vegetables, pasta and rice, peanut butter, and milk. We round out each basket with stock from our own non-perishable food pantry to ensure that each family receives a nourishing mix of protein, canned and boxed goods, and produce.

Now that we're settled in our new location, we're looking forward to working on ways that we can enhance our food program experience and increase the number of families we support through this crucial service.

Senior Socialization

Our Senior Socialization program was born out of a need to provide further support and connection for the seniors living in our community. As we connected with the older women using our food program, we discovered many of them were very lonely and isolated — a situation that worsened with the pandemic — so we set out to provide more socialization opportunities for them.

Thanks to a government grant and in-kind support from our incredible community, we are now running regular computer literacy sessions, bi-weekly yoga classes, and trips to attractions, such as the Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, and Ripley's Aquarium. The trips have been an amazing highlight, allowing seniors to meet new people and visit places they wouldn't be able to afford in their own city.



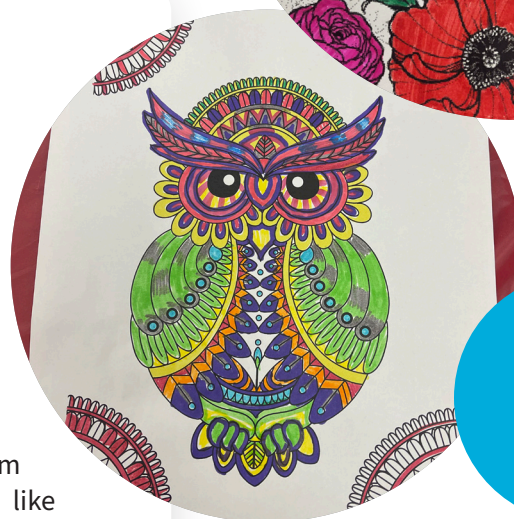
Women Ending Abuse and Violence (WEAV)

In the past year, WEAV has focused on providing healthy dating and relationship guidance for young women through a new five-week program. Designed to teach women how to keep themselves safe in relationships, the workshop creates a welcoming space where women can learn about the spectrum of abuse, signs that can lead to unhealthy relationships, and common terminology like gaslighting and love bombing. When developing the workshop, CSO program coordinator Amanda Nobile wanted to teach young women what she and her peers wish they could have learned when they were younger. Over the past year, the success of the program has multiplied, with requests for the workshops to be held at other shelters and community centres, for women of all ages.



Women on the Move


Designed to address the gap in services for women with physical disabilities who have experienced abuse, our Women on the Move program resumed in November 2023 with a new cohort of 25 women enrolled, at least 10 of whom are consistently attending each session. The twice-monthly program provides an opportunity for women to come together and chat in a safe space with their peers. Co-led and developed by Lucy DaCosta, a long-time facilitator in the disability advocacy space, the program features educational workshops, special activities like healing art projects, and social outings to attractions, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario.



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for your continued support.

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Nellie's



Shelter, Education & Advocacy
For All Women and Children