



*Changing lives and  
inspiring hope  
since 1974*

DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES OXFORD  
protection | prevention | possibilities



*“It takes all of us embracing the issues, having the necessary difficult conversations such as those generated by #MeToo and working together for gender equality, to end gender-based violence against women. We know that with all of us, working together, we can do this!”*

# *Our 2017/2018 Report to the Community*

# Working & Living in the Age of **#MeToo**

*Our Vision  
is to end  
the abuse  
of women and  
their children.*

**S**ince 1974, Domestic Abuse Services Oxford has worked on the front-lines to provide help, hope and support to women, children and adolescents impacted by domestic abuse and/or homelessness. Our 44-year history has been a roller coaster ride with each and every day bringing new hope, despair, determination, laughter, tears, amazing women and children, fear, happiness, frustration, sadness, love, creative problem-solving.... the list is long and endless. We are firm in our commitment to stand with those who seek our services and to bear witness to their courage, their grief, their strength.

But no year has been quite like the last year in which the power of social media was unleashed and clearly demonstrated with the #MeToo movement. Something in our society, our world, has profoundly changed and shifted. We don't know what all the "somethings" are yet, but change is here and we aren't going back. World-wide, victims shared their stories of assault, harassment, intimidation and bullying and took power back from the perpetrators.

While much of the focus of #MeToo centred on sexual crimes and misbehaviour, this incredible and long-overdue power shift has been felt by those of us who work in the domestic abuse and homelessness fields. DASO has seen an increase in crisis calls and in women seeking services, especially community-based counselling including sexual assault counselling. Women feel safer reaching out to say "this too has happened to me" whether at home or at work or at a bar or at church or at their friend's apartment – and to tell their story. We've always known that many women have been impacted by abuse. Now everyone else knows too.

This increased demand for services, both community-based and in shelter, is also a concern for us at DASO as our provincial government base funding amount has been static for years. This is an on-going challenge which requires us to be

very prudent with our financial budget in the face of continually rising costs in all areas: wages, utilities, property maintenance and technology to name just a few.

Every day we struggle with the lack of affordable housing across Oxford County. Women and their families are faced with having no place to go with rental occupancy rates hovering around 1%.

Demand for our community-based programming is also increasing. While our residential shelter is the service many identify most closely with DASO, in the past year 65% of our Service Users accessed community-based programming including counselling, specialized sexual assault counselling, programming for children and teens exposed to domestic violence (*Believe in Me*) and transitional housing and support services. The remaining 35% were shelter Service Users.

DASO's transitional housing and support staff spend many hours every week helping women navigate systems, particularly the justice system, through court and legal support. Family support staff help families heal from the trauma of domestic abuse and homelessness while helping moms parent their children.

Despite the many challenges, our team and volunteers do amazing work. Our staff are compassionate, skilled and genuinely care for our Service Users. We are here because of them. DASO is also fortunate to have a top-notch, cohesive management team who are devoted to our mission. Our Board of Directors are dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers who competently represent the communities of Oxford County.

To make a difference it takes time, energy, money and resources. It takes caring, patience, education, advocacy, trauma-informed trained staff and clinical interventions to prevent and stop domestic abuse and homelessness.

It takes all of us embracing the issues, having the necessary difficult conversations such as those generated by #MeToo and working together for gender equality, to end gender-based violence against women. We know that with all of us, working together, we can do this!

When Domestic Abuse Services Oxford was founded in 1974, gender equality was not a topic of conversation. Women were under-valued, and their rights overlooked. If you were a woman living in an abusive situation, there was no safe place to go, no one to talk to. Now DASO is part of a Canada-wide shelter network and we have made so much progress. Thank you for believing in us, for believing in women and for standing with us!

**Rhonda Hendel**  
*Executive Director*

**Mary Roberts**  
*Chair, Board of Directors*

**Our Mission**  
*We are leaders in providing effective, efficient and accountable services for women and their dependents and all those impacted by abuse and/or homelessness in Oxford County.*

# 2017/18 Highlights & Happenings

**536**

women, children and adolescents impacted by domestic abuse, sexual assault and/or homelessness received customized help and support

**373**

crisis calls received through our 24-hour crisis telephone line

**1,116**

telephone calls and texts received requesting information and support

**87/51**

The number of women and children respectively who called our shelter “home” during the 2017/18 fiscal year

## Domestic Abuse Services Oxford

### Financial Report

For the fiscal year April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018

#### Revenue

Ministry of Community and Social Services	\$934,175
Ministry of Health (LHIN)	\$33,680
County of Oxford	\$100,616
Donations / Grants / Foundations	\$183,312

#### Total

\$1,251,783

#### Expenditures

Residential domestic abuse and homeless programs	\$857,424
Community Outreach including counselling and group programs for women, children and adolescents, transitional and housing support	\$332,275

#### Total

\$1,189,699

For a copy of our audited financial statement, please call 519-539-7488 ext. 238

*Numbers don't lie....*

**But they don't always tell the full story!**

**O**ur facts, figures and service statistics underscore our impact on the communities of Oxford County. But they don't get to the heart of how we help women change their lives. Below are excerpts of letters, cards and emails sent by Service Users:

*My first real home was DASO. I felt safe and “at home” for the first time in my life. I learned so much from everyone – thank you from the bottom of my heart.*

*Thank you for all your kind care.*

*Thank you to everyone at DASO for my wonderful baby shower! I feel so blessed to have people excited for the arrival of my baby. The gifts are so appreciated, and I will never forget this thoughtful gesture and how it made me feel. God bless.*

*Thank you for being such an open and welcoming group! You taught me so much.*

*To the great team at DASO, it is with great joy that I'm able to thank you. This crisis has brought me to a new journey as a survivor.*

*You've supported and listened to me when no one else would. I've grown more independent by being here. I will update you on my life when I can. But know I'm able to smile again because of your help.*

*We are so grateful for all the support all of you have given us. Thanks to you, we are beginning our new happy and healthy lives!*



# Money, money, money

**W**e are grateful for the continued financial contributions of our primary funders who support our good work:

- The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Violence Against Women
- The Ontario Ministry of Health through the South West Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
- Oxford County

We could not offer our range of programs and services without generous help from our supporters, donors, businesses, unions, service clubs and foundations. From all of us at DASO, our heartfelt gratitude for choosing Domestic Abuse Services Oxford.

This year we are also especially thankful to the volunteer committee who revived and grew our annual fundraising walk and rally into the very successful Men in Heels & Lunch on Wheels event. Our thanks to co-chairs Leslie Farrell and Diane Langner. Many thanks too to Vuteq Canada for becoming our lead Stiletto sponsor and to Ankur Guleria and the staff at RBC on Dundas Street for letting us invade your parking lot and banking lives!

Third-party fundraisers, big and small, are important to us as they raise much needed funds and provide shelter staples. A few examples from this past year:

- For 10 years a volunteer committee comprised of current and former Board members, lead by Mary Anne Silverthorn, has organized a fabulous Spring Fashion Show with all proceeds going to DASO. The cumulative proceeds now total more than \$30,000.
- Unifor's current and retired members lend their support to a committee led by Bob Nickerson who organizes the annual Bob White Charity Golf Tournament. In 2017 we gratefully received \$15,000. Anova in London and Ingamo Homes were also recipients of tournament proceeds.
- On a sunny hot weekend in Woodstock, the Woodstock Women's Fast-ball Association's tournament was held with slo-pitch teams from all over southern Ontario. Board member Karen Greenham helped organize the event that raised \$7,050 for DASO.
- It was a cold day, but the 2nd annual Hops 'n Heels at Upper Thames Brewing Company was a hot 'n happening sold-out event with proceeds totalling \$4,366 donated to DASO.

## 178

women and adolescents accessed our community-based counselling/ transitional support programs

## 72

women received sexual assault therapeutic counselling; this included 113 group interactions and 847 community-based sessional interactions

## 148

children, teens and moms participated in our *Believe in Me* program for those exposed to domestic violence

## 86

women received help in navigating the court and legal systems

## Focus Accreditation Report

# Challenges and lessons learned

*Families are the building blocks of our society and a safe haven to nurture children and our intimate relationships. Yet, some Canadian families are in crisis and the statistics are staggering.\**

*Women are more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner and more likely to experience sexual abuse, more severe and chronic forms of intimate partner violence.\**

*Family violence is an important public health issue. Its impacts on health go beyond direct physical injury, are widespread and long-lasting and can be severe, particularly for mental health. Even less severe forms of family violence can significantly affect health.\**

*It takes many forms, ranges in severity and includes neglect as well as physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse. People who experience family violence need to be supported while people who are abusive and violent need to be held accountable.\**

**D**ASO's Board of Directors and the management team strongly support the principles of accountability. It is one of our organization's core values and we have comprehensive policies and procedures which emphasize our belief in accountability, whether this be to our funders, our donors or our stakeholders.

There are many tangible ways we demonstrate our accountability value principle. In 2015, DASO successfully achieved accreditation from Focus Accreditation for 2015-2019. Accreditation evaluates all aspects of our work and organization according to 14 domains (Ethical Practices, Outcomes for Service Users, Leadership and Governance, Finance, Risk Management and Accessibility, to name a few) with 184 measurable, rigorous standards.

An important component of accreditation is ongoing quality improvement and continuous learning. DASO manages this through our Organizational Learning and Quality Improvement Committee which is comprised of staff members from all our programs.

The purpose of the committee is to:

- track overall trends such as contextual information and organizational learning
- maintain best practice standards through quality improvement initiatives
- monitor data
- implement program evaluation

The 2017-2018 annual goals of this committee were all successfully completed. They were:

1. Assessment Process
2. Harm Reduction
3. Violence Against Women and Homelessness

### Observed Trends

#### Oxford County housing crisis

→ a noticeable impact on where discharging to (the majority NOT to independent housing); increased length of residential shelter stay; increased demand for shelter services; increase in community-based Service Users

#### Opiate crisis

→ increase in demand for services; increase in staff knowledge of harm reduction principles; improved collaboration with community partners (i.e. Oxford County Community Health Centre, Public Health, Addiction Services)

#### #MeToo Movement

→ increase in demand for services; DASO's role as a system-level advocate and domestic abuse/sexual assault leader in the community has been highlighted



## Organizational Learning

**Assessment Process:** Residential shelter program implemented new procedures and documentation.

**Risk Management:** A sub-committee reviewed best-practice risk management tools. The *Redwood Risk Management Tool* (Domestic Homicide Prevention Conference, London, Ontario 2017) is currently being evaluated for potential implementation in 2018.

## Evaluation Initiatives and Program Evaluation

1. Training and orientation for new staff (post-test feedback measure)
2. Residential House Meeting
3. Community Counselling Brief Model Evaluation (outcome rating scale, session rating scale)
4. Community Counselling Cognitive Processing Therapy case study to inform future group development (pre-test, post-test measure)
5. Residential shelter *Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting* program pilot group (pre-test, post-test measure)
6. Service User feedback boxes (qualitative outcome feedback)
7. MCSS Client Satisfaction Survey (outcome data)

## Lessons Learned

- The Organizational Learning and Quality Improvement Committee has come to appreciate the need for a balance between Outcome and Process Evaluation.
- DASO needs to be mindful of limits in agency resources (both human and other) in deciding when to take on new initiatives.
- Due to systemic trends – such as the lack of affordable housing – DASO is being required to respond with even more flexibility and creativity in service provision.

**Values** are the working principles and beliefs that guide Domestic Abuse Services Oxford's relationships with its stakeholders as we discharge our mission in pursuit of our vision. DASO's "CARE" values were first developed by staff in 2012 and have been since refined. Staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors agree to adhere to these values when we sign our annual Code of Conduct.

<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate honesty and transparency in all interactions</li><li>• Constructively resolve conflict and concerns</li><li>• Actively listen first and ensure others are heard</li><li>• Be sensitive and knowledgeable about differing communication styles and skills</li><li>• Offer a culture of openness and acceptance</li></ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pursue excellence and quality in service delivery</li><li>• Exhibit self-awareness and self-reflection</li><li>• Keep commitments</li><li>• Deliver results</li><li>• Take ownership of decisions, actions and their outcomes</li><li>• Exercise responsibility for self-care, learning, personal and professional growth</li><li>• Demonstrate integrity to stakeholders</li></ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt a non-judgmental approach</li><li>• Be genuine</li><li>• Right wrongs</li><li>• Demonstrate understanding and compassion</li><li>• Celebrate diversity</li><li>• Be respectful of each other's boundaries</li><li>• Respect confidentiality</li></ul>
<b>Empathy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide individuals with information/resources to make knowledgeable choices</li><li>• Believe in the individual and unique strengths of people</li><li>• Encourage and support people with their goals</li><li>• Invite and implement input from others</li><li>• Foster learning, feedback, coaching and mentoring</li></ul>

*Just under 9 million, or about one in three Canadians, say they have experienced abuse before the age of 15 years.\**

*Just under 760,000 Canadians say they had experienced unhealthy spousal conflict, abuse or violence in the previous five years.\**

*More than 766,000 older Canadians said they experienced abuse or neglect in the previous year.\**

*\*Family violence in Canada is a cause for concern, especially for those who are most vulnerable – women, girls and Indigenous women, but there are reasons to be optimistic for the future. Talking about family violence can be painful. However, it is the only way that we can become a society that accepts nothing less than safe and healthy families for everyone.\**

*\*Excerpted from A Focus on Family Violence, the Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2016.*



## 2017/2018 Board of Directors

Mary Roberts, Chair  
Pam Hagen, Vice-Chair  
Nino DeLuca, Treasurer  
Francine Paquette, Secretary

### Directors

Phyllis Eastlake\*  
Karen Greenham  
Sabrina Guilbault  
Sue Hodgins  
Danielle Paluska  
Marci Shelton  
Jaime-lyn Thorne  
Julie Thompson  
Paula Walton  
Rhonda Hendel, Executive Director, ex officio

## Management Team

Rhonda Hendel, Executive Director  
Jen Weicker, Residential Services Manager  
Karen Moritz, Business Manager  
Heather Werby, Operations Manager

## Staff Team

Sarah Brown  
Christina Crawford  
Sarah Fenton  
Jodie Flisak  
Kim Kane  
Allison Leger  
Eden Martin  
Laura McCreery  
Jenny Martin  
Carole Page  
Alex Patton  
Danna Stringle  
Samantha White

*\*resigned during the year*

Our staff team is strengthened by the contributions of our amazing students and volunteers who this year included: Betty, Susan, Mary Lynne, Lyn, Eliza, Rubul, Barb, Lynn, Victoria, Lori, Lyndsay, Leslie, Diane, Kelly and Kathy.

**Thank you all for your time, talents, kindness and assistance!**



The collective efforts of DASO's staff, volunteers, benefactors, partners and supporters ensured the success of 2017/18 fundraising events including the Spring Fashion Show, the inaugural Men in Heels & Lunch on Wheels and the "Lucky 7" Oxford Soup-Stock, the culmination of seven years of tasty, heart-warming community fun!



# daso

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inspiring hope  
since 1974*

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975 James Street, Woodstock, Ontario N4S 0A5

24-Hour Crisis/Information/Support Line:  
**519-539-4811 or 1-800-265-1938**  
Text **519-788-9993**

All other calls: **519-539-7488**

Website: **www.daso.ca**

Email: **info@daso.ca**

Facebook: **Domestic Abuse Services Oxford**

Charitable registration no. 10821 9767 RR0001