

## Our Report to the Community

**This year was a continuation of the impact of COVID-19.** As you are all aware, the Province of Ontario declared three lock downs during this reporting year. Each time, our services adapted to these “waves” by staff working with compassion and creativity.

During the first part of the pandemic, we were unable to use congregate living spaces, and relied on hotel spaces to ensure safety for all from the virus. This was never an ideal situation, and it did come with some setbacks. DASO worked hard during this time to re-design the spaces to ensure the safety of those who needed to come into shelter.

In July, after renovations to the congregate living spaces were completed, we were able to invite women and their families back into shelter. Knowing that with the COVID provincial mandates, we could ensure families were protected from the virus, while providing the necessary programs and services. Part of this was to begin a safe food handling program for all residents in our services as communal cooking was no longer allowed due to restrictions. Through COVID relief funding from the County of Oxford, we hired Kitchen Managers to ensure our spaces met Southwestern Public Health regulations. Delicious, homemade meals are now prepared, and delivered within the guidelines. To add, through the funding of United Way Oxford's Emergency Community Support Fund, we were able to purchase a warming oven and replenish food and essential kitchen supplies for the next 9 months.

It is important to note that our brave staff team continued to step up to the challenges ahead of them. Our 24/7 crisis line slowed at the beginning of the pandemic, which was an eerie feeling. We know that this signals a warning sign for many women, who were now locked down with their abuser. With nowhere for a woman to reach out to, no interactions with family or friends, this leaves women and children in isolation and at high risk of harm. For every woman who did reach out, we must thank our DASO staff team. They continue to be dedicated, compassionate and show genuine care for those who access our services. Our skilled management team worked above and beyond, working proactively, and thinking creatively.

DASO has continued to adapt with a persistent purpose and direction toward our mission. We are thankful to our local Southwestern Public Health for guiding us to maintain and safely provide services.

We want to acknowledge our government funders, especially the provincial Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the County of Oxford for also stepping up and helping those who are the most vulnerable in our communities. We thank you for assisting us and backing us as we all navigated through this pandemic.

The annual report you are now reading details statistical numbers, our financial situation, our mission and values, programs and services. This does not really tell you the brave stories of women who are courageous and made that leap to safety with her children. This is hard to measure, as it is so different for each family. Courage comes in many forms, and is what is needed to turn hopes into reality. There are successes and challenges along the way, but that is where true strength lies. It is an amazing gift to see the transformation of this courage before us.

The year 2021 also saw a change in leadership at DASO. As a result of our former executive director moving on from her position, I have had the privilege of first becoming an interim ED, then permanent ED, while continuing my role of Executive Director of Ingamo Homes. The two agencies have a natural bond, and it will be my goal to bring the agencies closer to work more collaboratively with each other and with other community partners.

The final note is to thank the DASO Board of Directors. This has no doubt been an exceptional year. Your dedication and commitment to this agency has truly been felt. We are fortunate to have a strong governance board who supports the entire staff and the work this agency does for women and children in our community.

“Commitment is an Act, not a Word.”

**Diane Harris,**  
Executive Director

**Pam Hagen**  
Chair, Board of Directors

# Programs and Services \*

**Domestic Abuse Services Oxford** is committed to ending the cycles of domestic abuse and homelessness by helping families make the transition to happy and healthy lifestyles.

All of our programs are free of charge and are confidential.



## 24-hour Crisis Line

The 24-hour crisis/help line, **519-539-4811** or toll free **1-800-265-1938**, is available to women in Oxford County who are in crisis, or who need help, support and information about any issue involving domestic abuse. It is also open to anyone in the community who has questions about abuse or is concerned about a friend, family member, neighbour or co-worker.

## Residential Program

Safe, short-term accommodation is provided to women and their children who are impacted by domestic abuse and/or homelessness. Our 21 bed shelter is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Residents receive individual support, safety planning, information and referrals as well as assistance customized to particular needs, such as parenting in crisis situations. Children are supported by Family Support staff and have access to indoor and outdoor play areas. Transportation within Oxford County can be arranged.

## Sexual Assault Therapy

Individual counselling and/or psychotherapy for women 16 years or older residing in Oxford County. Programming is specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of sexual assault or sexual abuse survivors, utilizing evidenced based trauma treatment modalities.

\* Some programs have been paused due to Covid-19 regulations See next page.

## Family Support Program

Family Support Worker provides support for mothers and their children to transition from domestic violence to safety. Family Support Worker also provides children's activities, respite and advocacy with community partners.

**Believe in Me** is a program for children and adolescents who have been exposed to violence in the home. They virtually meet weekly to deal with the effects of their mother being abused. Topics include anger control, conflict resolution and self-esteem. Mothers attend their own support group at the same time. Assistance with technology and childcare can be arranged.

## Transitional Resource Program

Our Transitional Resource Program helps women affected by abuse and/or homelessness overcome barriers as they start new, violence-free lives by providing advocacy, goal planning, safety planning, court support and assistance with housing. Staff are available to meet with women either at 975 James Street or virtually.

## Community Counselling

Individual and/or group counselling for women 16 years or older residing in Oxford County who have experienced domestic or intimate partner abuse. Programming is client-centred and trauma-informed to address the impacts of gender-based violence.

## Community Outreach and Support Programs

Support and information related to abuse and unhealthy relationships is available to women living anywhere within Oxford County.



**2020/2021**

## **Service Statistics**

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

**368** crisis calls

**1,432** inquiries by phone, text or email for information and support

**48** women, children & adolescents who called our shelter "home"

**80** women accessed transitional housing and resource supports including women who required help navigating court and legal systems

## **Domestic Abuse Services Oxford**

### **Financial Report**

For the fiscal year April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

#### **Revenue**

Ontario Ministry of Children, Community  
And Social Services

\$1,041,213

Ontario Ministry of Health (LHIN)

\$22,733

County of Oxford

\$118,474

Donations/Grants/Foundation

\$316,720

COVID-19 Emergency Funding

\$187,873

Total: \$1,687,013

#### **Expenditures**

Residential Shelter:

- domestic abuse and homeless programs

\$1,140,548

Community-Based:

- counselling programs for women, children, and adolescents; sexual assault counselling; transitional resource including court support.

\$288,750

Total: \$1,429,298

We are grateful for the financial support from our government funders who continue to support our good work. We also could not offer our range of programs and services without the generous help of supporters, donors, businesses, unions, service clubs and foundations. **From all of us at DASO, our heartfelt gratitude for choosing Domestic Abuse Services Oxford.**

## **Programs and Services Paused Due to Covid-19 Regulations**

### **Community Outreach Groups**

Weekly group sessions for women offer confidential support, information and strategies for positive change. They are open to all women who are experiencing abuse or who have been abused in the past or who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, or who are in unhealthy relationships.

### **Public Education/Violence Prevention**

Presentations to businesses, churches, schools and other community groups on topics pertaining to domestic abuse an/or homelessness.



## Mission

Providing effective, efficient, and accountable services for women, children and youth impacted by domestic abuse and/or homelessness in Oxford County.

## Vision

Our vision is a world with gender equality for all

## Guiding Principles

- \* We are feminists advocating for women's rights and gender equality.
- \* We facilitate collaboration.
- \* We are effective and accountable.
- \* We are responsive to service user and community needs
- \* Our services and programs are progressive and innovative.
- \* We are community leaders on the issues of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and homelessness.
- \* We foster a culture of continuous learning and quality improvement.

## CARE Values

### Communication

- \* Demonstrate honesty and transparency in all interactions
- \* Constructively resolve conflict and concerns
- \* Disengage/challenge/walk away from gossip
- \* Actively listen first and ensure others are heard
- \* Be sensitive and knowledgeable about differing communication styles and skills
- \* Offer a culture of openness and acceptance

### Accountability

- \* Pursue excellence and quality in service delivery
- \* Exhibit self-awareness and self-reflection
- \* Keep commitments
- \* Deliver results
- \* Take ownership of decisions, actions, and their outcomes
- \* Exercise responsibility for self-care, learning, personal and professional growth
- \* Demonstrate integrity to stakeholders

### Respect

- \* Adopt a non-judgmental, feminist approach
- \* Be genuine
- \* Right wrongs
- \* Demonstrate understanding and compassion
- \* Celebrate diversity
- \* Be respectful of each other's boundaries
- \* Respect confidentiality

### Empowerment

- \* Provide individuals with information and resources to make knowledgeable choices
- \* Believe in the individual and unique strengths of people
- \* Encourage and support people with their goals
- \* Invite and implement input from others
- \* Foster learning, feedback, coaching and mentoring

## Board of Directors

**April 1, 2020—March 31, 2021**

Pam Hagen, Chair  
Susan Hodgins, Vice-Chair  
Nino DeLuca, Treasurer  
Francine Paquette, Secretary  
Diane Harris, Executive Director, ex officio

### Directors:

Phyllis Eastlake	Karen Greenham
Danielle Paluska	Marci Shelton
Pat Coad	Sherri Vindasius

## Management Team

Diane Harris, Executive Director  
Jennifer Weicker, Residential Services Manager  
Karen Moritz, Business Manager (p/t)  
Heather Werby, Operations Manager (p/t)

## Staff Team

Kim K.	Jodie F.	Carole P.	Laura M.
Jenny M.	Sarah F.	Alicia A.	Caitlin B.
Brittany B.	Amanda D.	Avrey J.	Sam B.
Christine K.	Rebecca C.	Kelly R.	Ashley A.
Lara D.	Eden M.	Sabrina G.	
Kimberley C.	Cassandra H.	Samantha W.	
Anna H.*	Jaime-lyn T.*		

\*Kitchen Manager program provided by Oxford County funding as per Covid-19 regulations

