



DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES OXFORD  
PROTECTION | PREVENTION | POSSIBILITIES

# 2021/2022 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Protection  
Prevention  
Possibilities

# A Note from the Executive Director

2021-22 was another grueling year in terms of dealing with the pandemic shutdowns, social distancing and constant screening and testing. All DASO staff continued to rally through all of it, and supported families as best they could, while adhering to Ministry and Southwestern Public Health guidelines and best practices. Despite everything, the staff worked in innovative ways to ensure the programs and services were meeting service users unique and complex needs.

It is important to note that staff working in shelters and operating a 24/7 crisis line were deemed essential by the Ontario Government. DASO staff continued to show up and were unwavering in their commitment to support survivors of gender-based violence. It was amazing to see the number of staff taking on extra shifts while dealing with a virus that turned the world on its end. I am grateful for the strength and kindness of the staff and the management team through this very unprecedented time.

In April 2021, I took on the extra role of Executive Director for Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (DASO). Although the two agencies both provide similar services to survivors of gender-based violence, it is in very different and specific ways. Clearly, the shelter provides emergency shelter and supports, plus a 24/7 crisis line. Ingamo provides “second-stage” transitional housing supports and programs. There is a cross-over, but with the housing crisis at an all-time high, that cross-over is happening less and less.

The board of directors of both organizations are committed to undergoing separate strategic plans in the fall of 2022 in hopes of pursuing common goals, training and programs that will allow for improved systems, services, and communication for women and children in our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the DASO board of directors for their support through this past year. Their decision to share an ED with Ingamo Homes was not taken lightly. I thank you for your vision and faith as we embark on the next steps of what may be possible for both agencies.

I also want to thank the Ingamo board of directors for supporting me through this transition. The guidance you have offered me has been second to none. I am excited to see what the future holds as we work together to strengthen our commitment to effectively respond to the needs as they arise.

Finally, on behalf of the board of directors, staff and service users, I would like to thank the funders for the extra assistance needed to help us get through this pandemic. More importantly, a huge thank you to the on-going supporters of DASO. Every donor makes a positive difference for women and children in program with your caring and generous donations. Without you, we would not be able to make ends meet. We are extremely grateful for your support.

Respectfully,

**Diane Harris,**  
**Executive Director**



# 2021 Statistics

## 104

104 women received Transitional resource services including but not limited to risk assessment, safety planning, legal system navigation, housing and court support



## 47 women, 56 children

47 women and 56 children/teens called DASO home.

## 1,526

DASO responded to 1,526 calls for help. This translates to 4 calls every day. In comparison to previous years, this is one extra call every 3 days.



## 98 women

98 women accessed counselling services at DASO

## 16 Weeks

The escalation of the housing crisis during the pandemic has meant that the average length of stay has skyrocketed from 8-weeks to 16-weeks.



## \$200K

DASO needs to fundraise \$200,000 annually just to maintain essential programs and services for women and children experiencing domestic violence.

# »»»»» Program Updates

**Domestic Abuse Services Oxford** is committed to ending the cycle of gender-based violence by helping families make the transition to happy and healthy lifestyles.

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

## Residential Program

Our Residential Program is safe, secure accommodation for women 16+ (with or without children) who are impacted by gender-based violence. Due to increased health risks during the COVID-19 pandemic for a congregate living setting, DASO received funding from the Canadian Charitable Foundation to renovate 2 spaces into bathrooms. This allowed our families to have their own bedroom, bathroom and lounge spaces. Although this allowed for our families to be safer, it adversely affected the number of families that DASO can accommodate at one time. Currently, the Residential Program can only accommodate 5-7 families from single women to women with dependents. Compounding challenges with the housing crisis, system navigation and pandemic the length of stay for families has doubled in two years.

DASO is open 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year and trained staff are always available. However, after business hours, staff are often on their own to triage the increasingly complex needs of the shelter and the Crisis and Information Line. Currently, the Crisis and Information Line receives 3-5 calls per day. With the increase in safety and risk management during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is largely unmanageable to perform an intake single-staffed. Staff are trained to consider safety risk in balancing the needs of the shelter and community women on a case by case basis. DASO is consistently running at full capacity thus continually triaging safety risks among the community.

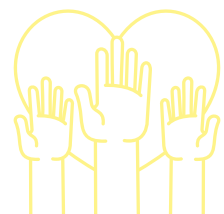
## Family Support

The Family Support Worker provides support for mothers and their children to transition from domestic violence to safety. The 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. The families 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

## Kitchen Management

In 2020, DASO received funding from Oxford County to provide Service Users with the Kitchen Manager Program. DASO was able to hire two caring and inspired Kitchen Managers to handle food donations, grocery shopping, preparing and serving nutritious meals and healthy snacks, baking delicious desserts, maintaining a safe and sanitized kitchen. They connect with women and families through food by recreating favorite family recipes, and embracing diverse celebrations and holidays, as well as supporting them with valuable life skills, safe food handling practices, and budgeting ideas.



# Program Updates

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## Community Support

This fiscal year, DASO was fortunate to partner with the Oxford County Community Health Centre (OCCHC) to enhance Sexual Assault Therapy supports in Oxford County. The intention of this partnership is to expand the comprehensiveness of the program to include access to wrap-around services such as primary care, nursing/women's health, links to a dietitian, community outreach and system navigation, and housing stability workers.

In the meantime, DASO is in the process of hiring a community support worker whose intentions are to focus on community outreach. The Community Support Worker (CSW) will be responsible for re-opening public education and community outreach programs/groups as the COVID-19 pandemic eases off.

DASO can help you feel emotionally and physically safer while learning how to build a healthier, happier life. We can help you develop coping skills and make changes to improve your quality of life.

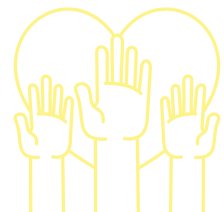
## Transitional Resource

The Transitional Support Worker is there to help women overcome the barriers to starting a life free of gender-based violence by providing practical assistance, advocacy, goal planning, safety planning, budgeting, legal/court support and assistance with housing applications/housing search.

Systems can be more difficult to navigate for DASO's Service Users due to the pandemic. When speaking with a woman about her specific needs and goals, the Transitional Resource Worker (TRW) can support her in navigating these systems.

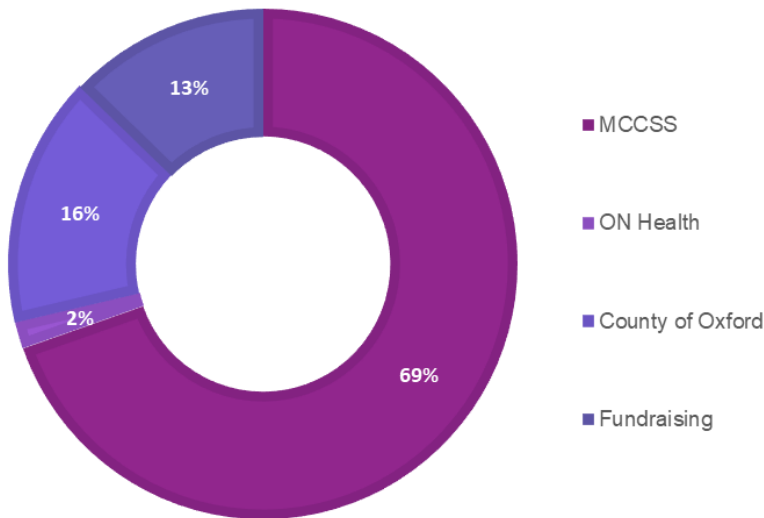
Currently, our TRW is receiving 3-6 new referrals per week so it may take up to 5 business days for her to respond to emails and voicemails. In the meantime women are directed to access the Crisis and Information line in case of emergency. Due to the housing crisis, more women than ever before are forced to stay in the relationship. The TRW can support these women with risk assessment and safety planning while continuing to work towards their goals of leaving their situation and finding safe housing. Supports offered through the program are still the same, but do look a little different. Support with lawyer appointments have moved to phone or virtual as well as all court proceedings are virtual. Due to complexities within Oxford County's legal system such as case backlog, the TRW notes a trend in women needing to represent themselves.

DASO has a temporary part-time TRW supporting the program. Due to staff shortages in the residential program, this position is often pulled to support the needs of the shelter and the 24/7 crisis line.



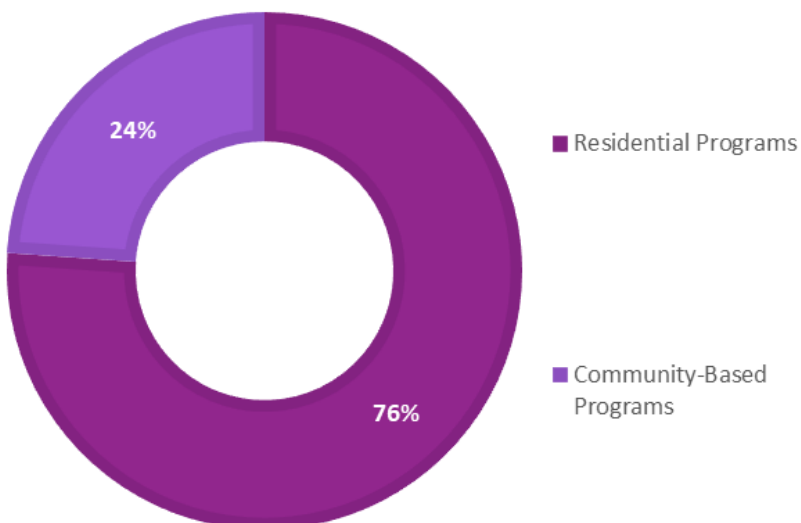
# Financial Report

## Revenue



Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	\$1,012,649
Ontario Ministry of Health (Ontario Health)	\$24,669
County of Oxford	\$230,649
Fundraising	\$185,640
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,453,607</b>

## Expenditures



Residential Program	\$1,192,852
Community-Based Programs	\$374,391
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,567,243</b>

**April 1, 2021—March 31, 2022**

## **Our Vision**

**Our vision is a world  
with gender equality  
for all.**

## **Our Mission**

**We are leaders in  
providing effective,  
efficient and accountable  
services for women and  
their children and all  
those impacted by abuse  
in Oxford County.**

## **Our Values**

**CARE: Communication,  
Accountability, Respect,  
Empowerment.**



## **Board of Directors**

**Susan Hodgins, Chair**

**Pam Hagen, Past Chair**

**Pat Coad, Vice-Chair**

**Nino DeLuca, Treasurer**

**Danielle Paluska, Secretary**

**Diane Harris, Executive Director, ex officio**

### **Directors:**

**Phyllis Eastlake    Karen Greenham**

**Marci Shelton    Sherri Vindasius**

## **Management Team**

**Diane Harris, Executive Director**

**Jennifer Weicker, Residential Program Manager**

**Karen Moritz, Business Manager**

**Heather Werby\*, Operations Manager**

**Samantha White, Communications Manager**

## **Staff Team**

**Kim K. \* Jodie F. Carole P.\* Laura M. \***

**Jenny M. Sarah F. Samantha W. Alicia A. Cait B.**

**Brittany B. \* Amanda D. Natasha M. Abbey G.**

**Christine K. Alyssa R. Kelly R.\* Sophia R.**

**Taylor R.\* Beth W.\* Amanda M.\* Demitra G.**

## **Kitchen Managers\*\***

**Anna H. Jaime-lyn T.**

*\*resigned from DASO during the fiscal year*

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