



2020-2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

HALDIMAND & NORFOLK WOMEN'S SERVICES

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Determination, strength, hope, dignity, and kindness. These are all qualities we exhibited as we adapted to another “COVID year.” We embraced the new normal of Zoom /Teams meetings, virtual workshops, and virtual training. It was a year like no other, yet we persevered. On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to thank each staff member for your commitment and advocacy to the women and children, whom you interact with daily.

I am honoured to be a HNWS volunteer, our agency does amazing work and it wouldn't be possible without the contributions of each and every one! Thank-you to Jane Scheel for her leadership. Jane continues to go above and beyond what's required to better individualize staff needs. Jane's innovation during this unprecedented time is infallible.

As a board, we continue to discuss and implement the strategic plan recommendations, which include fostering innovative approaches to meeting community needs, building long-term sustainability, continuing to strengthen the HNWS team and optimizing community engagement. Since the start of the pandemic, violence against women has intensified. Emerging data shows that shelters across the country need more financial assistance. Politicians are listening and responding – FINALLY!

We say goodbye to Melanie Douglas, whose dedication and leadership has been the foundation of our success. Melanie, our heartfelt gratitude for all you have done for HNWS. We will miss you and hope to see you at future events. Thank-you to Ashley Horton and Susan Samuel-Herter as they end their terms on the board. Their many contributions and volunteer hours did not go unnoticed. We wish you the very best. Welcome to new board members, Megan Soles and Katrina Schmitz. We look forward to working with you. My hope for the 2021-2022 year is that we will all see each other in person again, sooner rather than later.

If this past year has taught us anything, it's that we are more resourceful than we thought, and we can adapt our practices to continue to meet the needs of our clients. We've learned patience and tolerance on a whole new level, yet at the end of the day, our commitment never faltered. My sincere appreciation to the Staff, Executive Director and Board Members for your continued support to our agency and community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Becker, Board President

## VISION

**"A world in which every person has undisputed safety and security"**

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I have given literally hours of thought about the message I wanted to share this year in my AGM Report. I have agonized about how to sum up this fiscal year in a way that has meaning, has reflected our reality, has acknowledged all the contributions of clients, staff, the board, and the community and recognizes the many social injustices that have plagued us amid a pandemic.

COVID-19 has dramatically altered life for everyone, but what it has not done is reduce the incidence of Violence Against Women, in fact it has exacerbated it. Isolation has always been an abusive tactic and we have found ourselves in a situation where isolation has been globally sanctioned. Throughout this pandemic, women and their children have been more at risk than ever before. I anticipate that we will all be dealing with the consequences, both good and bad of this pandemic for years to come. We have all found ourselves in the same storm, the difference is some of our vessels are more storm worthy than others.

We began the fiscal year in lockdown and ended the fiscal year in lockdown, certainly not something we expected, were prepared for, or knew how to manage...but we did it!

I want to acknowledge our many brave partners on this journey:

- Our clients, they have faced such uncertainty, such fear both of their abuser and of COVID, do you take the risk of leaving or the risk of contracting COVID in an environment you are unsure of, a decision that no one should be faced with. The women we serve have been resilient, courageous and above all else our allies in the fight to stay safe from their abusers and stay safe from COVID.
- Our staff, on many occasions I have said to them I feel like I won the staff lottery and never has that been truer than this past year. These women have given their all, their passion for their work, their commitment to their clients and their flexibility and adaptability has been second to none. Each of these women have balanced their personal lives, their COVID fears and have still made the women we serve a priority. My genuine and heartfelt thanks to the management team, Sue Ann, Kelly and Vanessa, I could not have done this without you.
- Our board, these folks have done extraordinary work in providing governance and support to both me and the staff. Their concern for both clients and staff has been a priority throughout the year. They have been vigilant in making sure we have had everything we need to navigate these rough waters. Thank you to Michelle Becker for leading this board in one of the most difficult years of our existence, as the expression goes initiation by fire.

## MISSION

**"Dedicated to a non-oppressive social, political, and economic environment for women, their children, and their communities"**

## ...CONTINUED

- Our funders, thank you for recognizing the important role we play in our community. Thank you for listening to what we are saying and moving our message forward. My special thanks to our Program Supervisor, Sam Curtain for always being there and advocating on behalf of our clients. I feel our relationship with our funders has become much more of a partnership over the last year which scores as a COVID positive.
- My colleagues, these other leaders in Ontario have been a constant source of support to me throughout the year. Their practical thoughts, support and yes, laughter have been invaluable. The sisterhood is real.
- Our community, last on this list but certainly not least. The outpouring of support from our community has been overwhelming. Our community has always been generous, and for that we are grateful. COVID has awakened something in our community that has had them look inward and taking a closer look at our work and the social problem we are addressing.

The pandemic has provided us with many opportunities to reimagine how we serve our clients, our staff, and our community in the face of such uncertainty. Our new Strategic Plan was accelerated in ways we could have never imagined. We have adapted our service delivery, we have made exceptions, we have had to say NO when we did not want to. I can confidently say that no woman in our community went without service because of COVID, we were able to manage a COVID free year.

It has also been a year of the spotlight on Social Injustice...Black Lives Matter, Every Child Matters, Islamophobia, Homophobia and Human Trafficking. This is our work so let us not have COVID be our excuse for not taking action.

In closing I want to say a special thank you to Melanie Douglas who will be leaving our board this year. Melanie hired me, mentored me, befriended me, and has provided sage advice to me over the years. It is a rare human being who commits themselves to a cause and does it with responsibility and passion, Melanie is that woman.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Scheel, Executive Director

## VALUES

**"Integrity"**

**"Non-judgement"**

**"Transparency"**

**"Equity"**

**"Wellness"**

# PROGRAM STATISTICS

APRIL 1, 2020 - MARCH 31, 2021

## Residential Program

**507**

Crisis Calls

**1028**

Counselling Calls

**94%**

2020-2021

Shelter Occupancy

**58**

Women in  
Residence

**38**

Children in  
Residence

At no time during the 2020-21 year did COVID-19 prevent us from providing residential services. The statistics below reflect that we did however, experience some limitations.

**126** Women referred out due to capacity limitations

**78** Individuals referred to more appropriate services



# PROGRAM STATISTICS

APRIL 1, 2020 - MARCH 31, 2021

## Community Program

**62**

Women  
Counselled  
(Urgent Care)

**213**

Women  
Counselled

**86**

Women  
Supported in  
Family Court

**46**

Women  
Counselled  
(Sexual  
Assult/Abuse)

**49**

Families  
referred to  
CAS/VAW  
Liaison Program

**50**

Women  
Supported in  
CAS/VAW  
Liaison Program

**125**

Women  
Supported in  
Housing + Legal  
Advocacy

**0/0**

Volunteer Program/  
Women's Groups

**17**

Women Served at  
Quetzal Family  
Homes

Statistically, these numbers don't tell the whole story of 2020-21. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our Volunteer Program and Group Programs were paused temporarily.

# PROGRAM STATISTICS

APRIL 1, 2020 - MARCH 31, 2021

## Child & Youth Program

**20**

Moms  
Counselled

**16**

Children  
Counselled

**9**

Teens  
Counselled

**51**

Students  
Counselled in  
Elementary  
Schools

**71**

Students  
Counselled in  
S.T.A.R.  
Program

**66**

G.I.R.L.S.  
Power Camp  
Participants

**34**

Children Who  
Witness +  
Impact Group  
Participants

**20**

Youth  
Supported in  
Housing

**8**

G.I.R.L.S.  
Power Camp  
Facilitators



# **HALDIMAND & NORFOLK WOMEN'S SERVICES 2020-21 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Michelle Becker - **President**

Denise Norman - **Vice President**

Ashley Horton - **Secretary**

Melanie Douglas - **Past President**

Rebecca Malo

Erika Searles

Stephanie George

Mike Main

Susan Samuel-Herter

Rob Weber

Marie Steiner

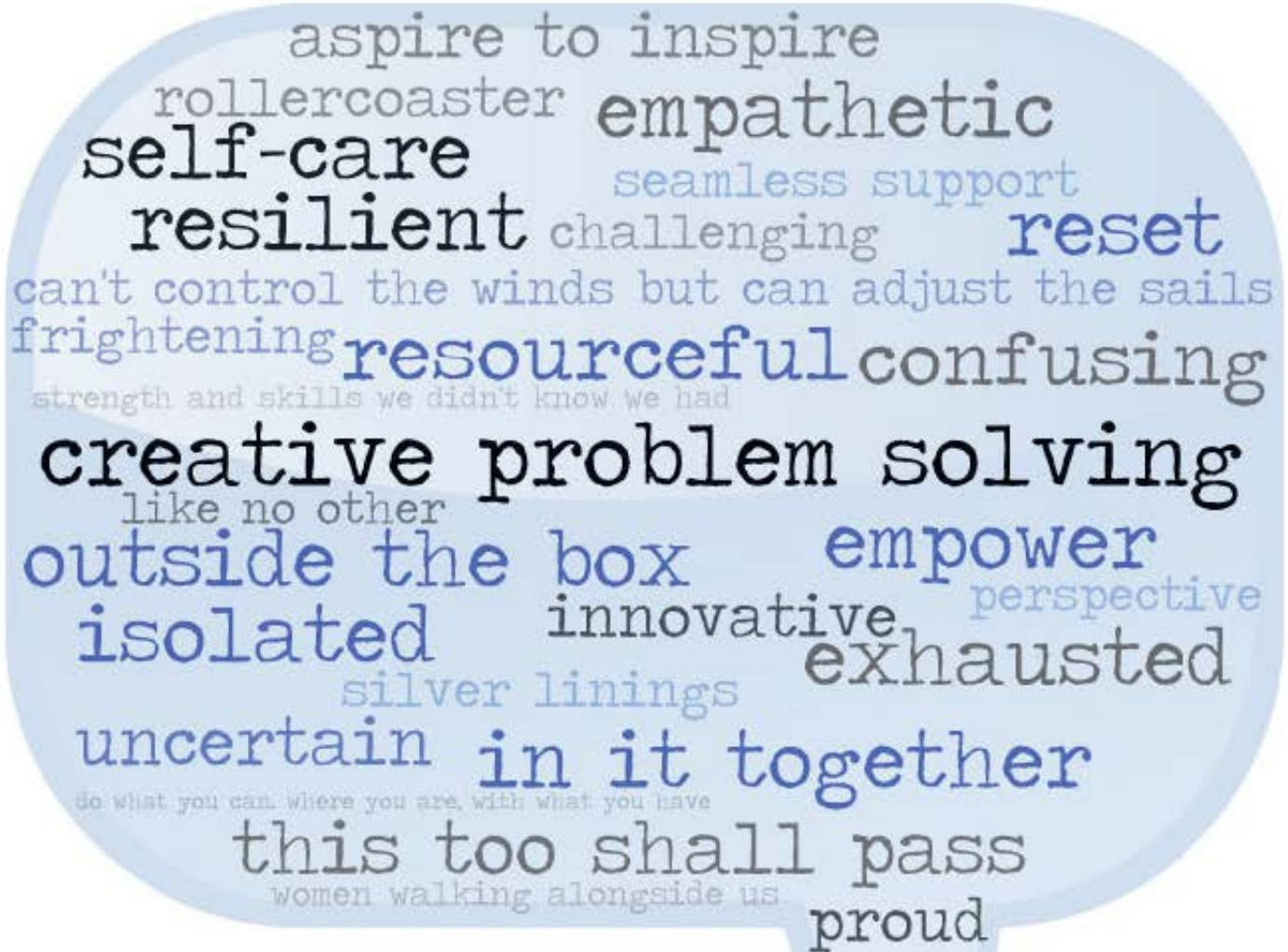
**Legal Counsel** - Brimmage Law Group

**Auditor** - Millard Rouse & Rosebrugh LLP

A sincere note of appreciation to all those who supported us this past year. Your support has allowed us to continue to deliver the programs and services that provide shelter, safety, and resources, to women and children experiencing violence in our community.

We see you, and we thank you.

# CLOSING THOUGHTS...



aspire to inspire  
rollercoaster empathetic  
self-care seamless support  
resilient challenging reset  
can't control the winds but can adjust the sails  
frightening resourceful confusing  
strength and skills we didn't know we had  
creative problem solving  
like no other  
outside the box empower  
isolated innovative perspective  
silver linings exhausted  
uncertain in it together  
do what you can where you are, with what you have  
this too shall pass  
women walking alongside us  
proud

HNWS STAFF  
REFLECTIONS  
ON 2020-21