

Annual Report

2025-2026



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



This year, Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services marks 40 years of service, a milestone built on thousands of moments of safety, care, and courage. We honour that legacy by continuing to support our community today while preparing for what is asked of us tomorrow.

Most people know us for emergency refuge. Yet our work extends far beyond the shelter walls. Across Haldimand and Norfolk, women, youth, and families continue to face gender-based violence, housing instability, poverty, and isolation. Meeting these realities takes a full continuum of support: safety planning, counselling, outreach, school-based programming, housing support, crisis intervention, and prevention education, delivered where people are, when they need it.

What sustains this breadth of care is the people behind it. For four decades, front line managers, volunteers, donors, community partners, and board members have brought skill, compassion, and resolve to every interaction. Their commitment ensures that every woman who reaches out for help finds support and hope.

The past year brought growing complexity, including rising living costs, scarce affordable housing, and longer pathways to stability. Even so, our team worked to expand outreach, strengthen prevention programs, and stood beside women and children through some of their hardest days.

Our community stood with us as well. From the inaugural Farm to Table Dinner at Cranberry Creek Gardens and our International Women's Day Community Bingo to wellness and awareness events throughout the year, our supporters showed up in ways that remind us when the full scope of our work is visible, support follows.

We remain grateful for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, whose partnership anchors essential services. At the same time, persistent sector underfunding, rising operational costs, staffing pressures, and increasing demand require us to advocate and to innovate. Forty years have taught us that resilience is built through steady stewardship and bold adaptation. We will do both.

Looking to the year ahead, we are focused on rebuilding and strengthening our volunteer base to deepen community connection and extend our reach beyond shelter; investing in prevention and early intervention, because a safer future starts well before a crisis and advancing sustainable funding and partnerships, so our services remain strong for the next generation.

To my fellow board members, our leadership and frontline teams, volunteers, partners, and supporters: thank you. The work is demanding and often unseen, but its impact echoes across families and years. Your dedication carries forward a 40-year legacy of care and builds the next 40. It is an honour to serve alongside you.

With gratitude,

KIM SCHOTT

Chair, Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



In 2026, Haldimand & Norfolk Women's Services celebrates a significant milestone: 40 years of supporting survivors of gender-based violence across Haldimand and Norfolk.

For me, this year also holds personal significance. While this is my first year as Executive Director, it reflects 18 years of being part of this organization. Over that time, I have witnessed how HNWS has continuously evolved to meet the changing realities faced by survivors in our community. I am proud to follow in the footsteps of strong leadership, including Jane Scheel and Regina Homeniuk, whose dedication helped shape HNWS into the organization it is today.

Four decades ago, HNWS opened its doors in a modest house on Talbot Street—a 10-bed shelter powered by a small but deeply committed team. Today, we provide space for 21 residents and offer more than a dozen programs that extend far beyond shelter. This growth tells a clear story: survivors' needs have become more complex, and our response has grown with them.

This year has been one of change and growth for our agency, and we are proud to announce the relaunch of our volunteer program which will offer the community new ways to support our work.

Like many organizations across the province, we are facing rising demand alongside complex and growing challenges—housing instability, affordability pressures, mental health needs, limited rural services, and the ongoing impacts of gender-based violence.

Yet every day, our team meets this reality with empathy and unwavering commitment. The work of HNWS never stops—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—from crisis response and shelter services to counselling, outreach, prevention, advocacy, and community partnerships. This work changes lives—for survivors and for their children.

As we reflect on 40 years of service, we also look ahead with clarity and purpose. We remain committed to strengthening our services and working toward a community where everyone can live free from violence and oppression.

Thank you to our staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, community partners, funders, donors, and supporters for your continued trust and commitment. Most importantly, thank you to the survivors whose courage continues to guide our work and remind us why it matters.

It is an honour to carry forward the legacy of those who built this organization and to work towards a future of safety, support, and hope for survivors across Haldimand and Norfolk.

AMBER WARDELL

Executive Director

PROGRAM STATISTICS

APRIL 1, 2025 – MARCH 31, 2026

WOMEN'S COUNSELLING PROGRAM

248

WOMEN SERVED IN **717** SESSIONS

1,386

COUNSELLING HOURS

+**465** INTAKE SESSIONS

+**181** URGENT COUNSELLING SESSIONS

SEXUAL ASSAULT/ABUSE PROGRAM

41

WOMEN COUNSELLED IN **410** SESSIONS

CAS/VAW LIAISON PROGRAM

16

INDIVIDUALS SERVED IN **53** SESSIONS

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING & SUPPORT

106

WOMEN SUPPORTED IN **1,553** SESSIONS

FAMILY COURT SUPPORT PROGRAM

89

INDIVIDUALS SERVED IN **301** SESSIONS

SHELTER PROGRAM

54

WOMEN IN
RESIDENCE

18

CHILDREN IN RESIDENCE

69%

OCCUPANCY
(BASED ON 19 BEDS)

46

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY
IN DAYS

28

CHILDREN COUNSELLED
(CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM)

745

CRISIS CALLS

682

COUNSELLING CALLS

368

REFERRED OUT
(CAPACITY)

137

REFERRED OUT
(OTHER SERVICES)

PROGRAM STATISTICS

APRIL 1, 2025 - MARCH 31, 2026

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING

(INCLUDES CHILDREN WHO WITNESS GROUP)

81

STUDENTS COUNSELLED

IN **1,127** SESSIONS

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & COUNSELLING

83

STUDENTS COUNSELLED

IN **668** SESSIONS

GIRLS POWER CAMP

54

STUDENTS PARTICIPATED

+23 FACILITATORS

+5 WILDFLOWER VOLUNTEERS

YOUTH HOUSING ADVOCACY

18

YOUTH SERVED IN **414** SESSIONS

QUETZAL FAMILY HOMES

18

WOMEN SERVED IN **225** SESSIONS

* "Sessions" includes individual counselling sessions, client contact and outreach.

VALUES

"INTEGRITY"

OUR WORK IS GUIDED BY EXCEPTIONAL AND CONSISTENT STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

"TRANSPARENCY"

WE WORK OPENLY AND HONESTLY WITH WOMEN, FAMILIES, STAKEHOLDERS, AND OUR COMMUNITY.

"NON-JUDGEMENT"

EACH INDIVIDUAL STORY IS UNIQUE. WE HONOUR INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES AND AIM TO PROVIDE SERVICES THAT REFLECT THE NEEDS OF EACH PERSON WE SERVE.

"EQUITY"

WE WORK TO DISMANTLE BARRIERS, PROMOTE EQUITABLE SYSTEMS, AND ADDRESS MARGINALIZATION IN OUR COMMUNITY.

"WELLNESS"

WE AIM TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE WHOLE PERSON.

40 OF SUPPORT & SAFETY

1985

Working committee formed to develop a shelter for survivors of abuse.

1986

The first shelter is purchased & opens on Tablot Street, Simcoe

1993

HNWS moves to a new, larger location on Homewood Avenue, Simcoe

2000

The first G.I.R.L.S. power camp is held in Waterford

2003

An addition is made to the shelter on Homewood Avenue

2019

HNWS creates it's own transitional housing; "Janes House" is purchased

2026

HNWS expands bedspace, relaunches volunteer program and new training opportunities





GIRLS POWER CAMP, 2026

**HALDIMAND & NORFOLK WOMEN'S SERVICES
RECOGNIZES OUR FUNDER, THE MINISTRY OF
COMMUNITY, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL SERVICES
(MCCSS), AND THANKS OUR PROGRAM
SUPERVISOR, SAM CURTIN.**

**THANK YOU TO OUR 2025-26 DONORS, WHOSE
GENEROUS SUPPORT HELPED TO PROVIDE
VALUABLE, MUCH NEEDED SERVICES TO OUR
COMMUNITY.**

VISION

**"A WORLD IN WHICH EVERY PERSON HAS
UNDISPUTED SAFETY AND SECURITY"**

MISSION

**"DEDICATED TO A NON-OPPRESSIVE
SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC
ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN, THEIR
CHILDREN & THEIR COMMUNITIES"**



JANE'S HOUSE - APRIL 2026

WITH THANKS TO

- ♥ Wanda and Scott Salverda Foundation
- ♥ The Clark Companies Inc.
- ♥ 100 Women Who Care Norfolk
- ♥ The Norfolk Community Foundation



Whose collective donations between 2024-2025 allowed HNWS to
pay off the mortgage on "Jane's House" in 2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

APRIL 1, 2025 - MARCH 31, 2026

Kim Schott

Chair

Katrina Schmitz

Vice Chair

Marie Steiner

Secretary

Megan Soles

Treasurer

Malti Patel

Director

Michelle Alvey

Director

Ashley Malo

Director

Payton Mitchell

Director

Heather Kostecki

Director



HNWS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
DAY BINGO NIGHT, 2026

Legal Counsel

Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti LLP

Auditor

Thompson Goossens Accountants



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