

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

## Reflecting On Our Growth

Reflecting back to our last Annual General Meeting reminds me of welcoming our newest board members in 2021-2022 and appreciating the contributions of Abi Ajibolade, Melanie Ducharme and Jessie Roger. They've all joined OAITH's Board of Directors with enthusiasm and jumped right into board positions and committees without hesitation. With those new additions we also had to say goodbye to our President Arlene McCalla in December 2021 and Toronto Regional Representative Carol Latchford in March of 2022. Both Arlene and Carol brought with them remarkable leadership and commitment through their role as board members and their participation on OAITH's Policy Committee. Through their leadership we saw the membership approve an updated Intersectional Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Policy that ultimately helped to shape and inform the development of new resources and training over the last year with project funds from MCCSS. With OAITH board leadership changing mid-year our Vice-President, Sue Weir stepped in to ensure we could continue moving forward-many thanks to Sue Weir for your focus and leadership as Interim President during this transition!

Over the last year leaning into new opportunities, learning and challenges wouldn't have been possible without the tremendous work and contributions of Amber Wardell, Learning & Development Coordinator and Lauren Hancock, Policy & Research Coordinator. Through their work OAITH has been able to take on projects to support shelters across the province through the distribution of Wellness Grants, develop new training and resources and develop a new website that will support workers and survivors looking for all types of gender-based violence services across Ontario. Further to this we've developed new partnerships to build broad-based awareness about femicide in Ontario through the We Count Femicide Because Campaign. I will often receive thoughtful expressions of appreciation and gratitude for OAITH's work on tracking and educating about femicide. To accomplish intentional and continual monitoring, analysis, dialogue and communication about violence and femicides occurring here in Ontario, it requires compassion, collaboration and empathy-all of which you both bring to your work every day. Thank you for your focus and determination to make our communities safer.

As I look forward to the year ahead, I am grateful to our members and ally organizations that have put your trust in us to listen to your experiences, to shape and communicate your stories that give us what we need to educate, build awareness and advocate for safer, equitable and non-violent communities. As the OAITH team continues to grow with our newest team member Sherece Taffe, Digital Office Support joining us in August 2022, our aim is to continue being a strong provincial voice for our members and ally organizations.

The time you and your staff have contributed to OAITH's work is valued and a guiding force of our accomplishments. Thank you for your generosity and guidance as we continue to work towards ending gender-based violence.



Many Thanks,  
Marlene Ham, Executive Director

# 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## Learning Together: MCCSS Training Project

2021 marked another year of growth and development within OAITH's learning community and available evidence-based training resources. Two new self-paced trainings were developed for the OAITH Training Hub utilizing project-based MCCSS funding:

- 1 Taking Action in Our Spheres of Influence:** Intersectional Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Gender-Based Violence was developed in collaboration with Nicole Bernhardt and Annelies Cooper of NSB Consulting as a supplement to *“Taking Action in Our Spheres of Influence: An Intersectional Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Gender-Based Violence Framework”*. This training assists learners in developing a social justice-based analysis for examining intersectional manifestations of oppression and racism within their spheres of influence (individual, interpersonal, institutional and community), while critically assessing areas of strength and opportunities for growth with respect to anti-oppressive organizational praxis.
- 2 Gender-Based Violence, Technology and Safety** is focused on assisting learners in gaining a greater understanding of the intersections of gender-based violence and technology. The overall focus of the course is increasing capacity to promote safety of survivors of technology-facilitated violence. Technology is explored both as a tool of and platform for gender-based violence, but also as a resource to understand risk and increase safety.

## Other highlights from this past year include:



28 Courses total now  
available in the training hub  
(16 English, 12 French)



1,473 New registered users



1,769 Course completions



4,878 Total learners registered  
in the training hub

# 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

## 2021-2022 Highlights

### Bringing Wellness to the Forefront: MCCSS Training Project

2021 was a year of significant challenges for many gender-based violence focused organizations. In response to these challenges, OAITH partnered with Action ontarienne contra la violence faite aux femmes to provide microgrants to Ontario VAW agencies focused on fostering overall agency and worker wellness.

Utilizing funds provided by MCCSS, 47 agencies across Ontario received funding under the project which was coordinated by OAITH. A great deal of flexibility was offered in terms of activities completed however eligible suggestions were provided within 9 main activity categories:

- Arts-based
- Physical-health focused
- Talk-based
- Nature-based
- Body and breathing based
- Mindfulness-based
- Team building
- Culture-based
- Organization-based

Many agencies participated in the MCCSS Wellness Microgrant project with creativity, enthusiasm and thoughtfulness. The project was evaluated both via participating agency feedback and feedback from employees who participated in project activities. Overall the vast majority (248/88.5%) of all activity participants who completed the voluntary evaluation form rated the wellness activities they completed as moderately, very, or extremely effective at improving employee wellness. Activity participants spoke about the importance of finding ways to meaningfully connect with teammates to disrupt the compounded isolation of GBV work in general and the changing context of work formats within COVID- restrictions. The most commonly reported outcomes from wellness activities included increase in agency focus on wellness, improvement in team communication and providing an opportunity for in-person team connection.

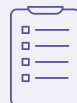
One of the most tangible outcomes of the project is the new Wellness Committees which have been established, reactivated or expanded in VAW shelters across Ontario. Some without active wellness committees at the end of the project indicated intention to pursue this in the near future; *“We didn’t have a formal wellness committee, but we will be implementing this as we did see the benefit it had on the team”* (participating agency).

Overall, we learned a great deal about the impact of COVID on the wellness of GBV sector workers and agencies throughout the project, as well as the potential tools that may be helpful to increase wellness. Tips for increasing employee wellness identified through the project include providing regular opportunities for co workers to connect, team build, be creative, and show appreciation.

#### Materials developed as part of the project include:



Mental Wellness of VAW Sector Staff  
During COVID-19: Literature Review



Resource List for VAW Agencies Related  
to Wellness Committees

**Thank you to everyone who participated in the project and your continued ongoing commitment to fostering GBV worker wellness.**

# WRAPPED IN COURAGE REPORT



**Wrapped in Courage 2021** marked a number of firsts for the campaign! Communities across Ontario proclaimed their commitment ending gender-based violence by raising a new, custom designed Wrapped in Courage Flags. Community members, agencies, and local leaders came together in their purple Wrapped in Courage scarves during live-stream and in-person proclamation events and flag raisings to show their support for survivors and the work of Ontario GBV shelters. For the first time, the campaign continued throughout the month of November, remaining active during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

## 2021 Campaign Highlights Include:

**104**

Wrapped in Courage flags in French and English displayed throughout Ontario

Proclamation/flag raising events

**27**

**638**

Total social media posts - nearly twice as many as last year's campaign!



**500%**

Increase in # of Wrapped in Courage followers on FB!

**49**

Proclamations declared by municipalities, towns, and cities



New media created highlighting femicide statistics  
**"Airing Our Laundry Video"**



**6**

New Graphics highlighting the diverse scope of work of Ontario GBV agencies

**Thank you again to all of the participants of the 2021 Wrapped in Courage Campaign; as always, your support, creativity and team spirit were invaluable. We look forward to celebrating a decade of collective achievement during the 2022 10th Anniversary Campaign next year.**

# WE COUNT FEMICIDE BECAUSE



## Initiative Overview

In November 2021, in partnership with Building a Bigger Wave Ontario (BBWON), OAIH launched a public awareness campaign - aimed at ending femicide within Ontario. As a part of this initiative, violence against women coordination committees (VAWCCs) and violence against women (VAW) shelters have been asked to publish a press release when a femicide occurs in their local community and engage local politicians to support local prevention efforts. This initiative aims to raise public awareness about femicide as well as improve government and system engagement and collaboration. Since the initiative began, VAWCCs and VAW shelters around the province have continued to engage local government officials regarding their organizational and community needs to work to address levels of violence and prevent future femicides from occurring. VAW Shelters and VAWCCs have also continued to connect with local media sources to publish press releases, which help to contextualize these deaths as femicide while connecting survivors in the community to local services.

To support this initiative and as a way to actively track and report on femicide trends within the province, OAIH began publishing monthly femicide reports in March 2021. Released at the beginning of each month as a two page infographic factsheet, the monthly reports increase accessibility to femicide data and provide a snapshot of emerging trends. These monthly reports are shared with the OAIH membership and BBWON network, as well as with a growing mailing list and a number of different government ministries. Analytics from the media report links included in the monthly reports have indicated that the reports are being accessed from a number of sources from many different countries, including Canada, the United States as well as countries within Europe.

The Election Edition Femicide Snapshot can be accessed online via [bit.ly/ElectionEdition](https://bit.ly/ElectionEdition).



## Election Edition Femicide Factsheet

In advance of the provincial election, the We Count Femicide Because campaign released an election edition femicide factsheet that examined femicide trends in Ontario between June 7th 2018 - April 30th, 2022. The report also included ten systemic issues that need to be addressed in Ontario to prevent gender-based violence and femicide. Some of the recommendations included in the Election Editions were new and sustainable funding to GBV services, actions to address geographical connectivity issues (internet, cellular, transportation), poverty reduction and implementation of the 231 calls for justice to work towards decolonization and address the disproportionate rates of violence that is experienced by Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit individuals.

More information regarding the We Count Femicide Because initiative can be found on the OAIH website under “We Count Femicide Because”.



**ONTARIO ELECTION 2022 TOP 10** SYSTEMIC ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE IN ONTARIO

- 1** REDUCE THROUGH DECENT WORK, LIVING WAGES, AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE, IMPROVING FOOD INSECURITY AND INCOME SUPPORTS
- 2** INCREASE AFFORDABILITY, ACCESS TO AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SUPPLY
- 3** INCREASE ACCESS TO SUPPORTS, HARM REDUCTION SERVICES, SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES AND ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, CARE AND SERVICES
- 4** ADDRESS AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE BY INCREASING ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION, CELLULAR COVERAGE AND AFFORDABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACROSS THE PROVINCE
- 5** NEW AND SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS TO PREVENT PROGRAMS FOR SURVIVORS, CHILDREN AND THOSE WHO CAUSE HARM
- 6** RESPOND TO THE AND ONGOING COLONIZATION LEADING TO THE DISPROPORTIONATE RATES OF VIOLENCE AND MURDER THAT IS EXPERIENCED BY INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT INDIVIDUALS AND IMPLEMENT THE 231 CALLS FOR JUSTICE
- 7** IMPROVE THROUGH POLICY, TO ADDRESS RACISM, HATRED AND OPPRESSION, ANTI-ASIAN RACISM, ANTI-BLACK RACISM, ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM, ANTI-SEXTONIAN, NAZI-RACISM, ISLANDERPHOBIA, HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA, TRANSMISSIVIN AND ABLEISM
- 8** INCREASE ACCESS TO A RESPONSIVE LEGAL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM
- 9** RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE AND ADDRESS THE INCREASE IN VIOLENCE AND AMONG WOMEN ABOVE THE AGE OF 55
- 10** ENSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS THAT LEAD TO POVERTY, HOUSING DISPLACEMENT, FOOD INSECURITY, AS THIS INCREASES THE RISKS OF

ELECTION PRESS RELEASE: #WECOUNTFEMICIDEBECAUSE #TAKINGCOUNT&TAKINGACTION

# MULBERRY: SAFETY STARTS HERE

## A New Directory for Ontario GBV Related Services

With funding provided by the Rogers Family Foundation through Women's Shelters Canada, OAITH engaged the membership through an environmental scan and a number of regional interviews to determine what was needed within the sector to support the digitization of services. One of the recommendations to emerge was the creation of an online database that would house information regarding the various types of gender-based violence (GBV) services. To further inform the creation and design of this resource, OAITH held a series of virtual engagement sessions with a variety of stakeholders including provincial associations and provincial helplines, an OAITH working group and a survivor led group that also works within the sector.

Based on the feedback received throughout the engagement sessions, OAITH has developed mulberry, an online platform that will host information regarding a wide range of services for both survivors and perpetrators of GBV. This resource acts as an online directory, providing the contact information regarding GBV services in the province and also includes a number of resources aimed at improving safety for survivors who are experiencing violence, including online safety tips and safety resources and quick access to the provincial helplines. Additional safety features have been included in the website design and functionality, including a quick exit feature that overrides any stored browser history from the mulberry site, preventing the site from being easily re-accessed. Another key feature of the resource is that it will clearly highlight the formats in which individuals can access services, whether that be in-person, over the phone, or through text or chat services. The mulberry finder is a survivor-focused tool that has been created as a way to search the database based on specific needs, whether that be immediate, safe shelter, counseling, housing supports, etc. The website also includes google translate capabilities, a dark mode and font-size customization to improve



accessibility. The website has prioritized the inclusion of trauma-informed principles within the overall design and functionality, including transparency, collaboration, choice, empowerment and safety. The website has also been designed to be simple, streamlined and low-content and can also be easily accessible via mobile devices.

The resource aims to improve awareness of and access to the many different services that are available within the province and will include traditional and non-traditional services such as survivor and peer-based groups as well as cultural and faith based services. The resource will support survivors navigate services, providing choice and prioritizing safety and will also provide information regarding perpetrator and male focused services such as Partner Assault Programs, Caring Dads and counseling. Friends and family members supporting loved ones will also be able to easily access information regarding the many available services in the province and it will serve as a resource to GBV service providers as a way to increase knowledge and connection among different services. The mulberry website will be live November, 2022.

# VIRTUAL SERVICE RESOURCE

Under the Rogers Family Foundation Grant, OAITH in collaboration with consultants Kaylen Fredrickson and Paula Wansbrough have developed Emerging Stronger: Promising Practices in Virtual Service Delivery. The recommendation for the creation of this resource came out of the environmental scan conducted with OAITH members to determine what was needed to support the digitization of services within the VAW sector. Many shelters identified a number of challenges they faced in transitioning to the provision of virtual services, including considerations surrounding survivor risk as well as data collection, user privacy and overall functionality. However, many members also highlighted several benefits to virtually providing services, including increased access and reduction in barriers as well as the ability to reach different populations within their community, and many identified the desire to continue to offer virtual services in a hybrid-model when possible. The promising practices guide has been created to highlight the many strategies that were implemented, by shelters and other service providers, throughout the pandemic

and includes a number of tools that can support organizations as they continue to find new ways to reduce barriers to service and reach survivors.

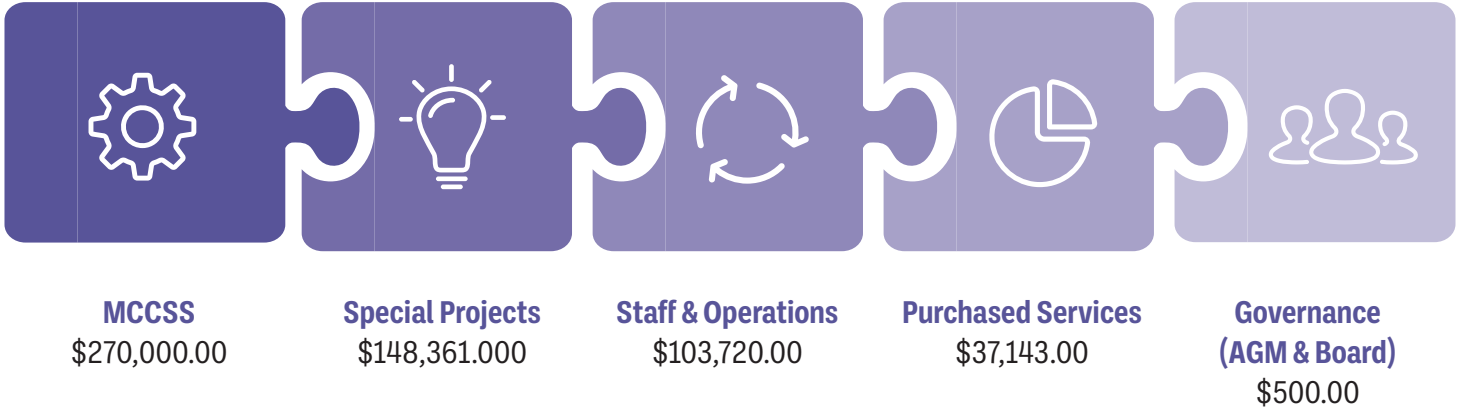
Throughout the environmental scan, members also highlighted challenges they faced in ensuring policies aligned with the new practices that were being implemented throughout shelters. As a part of this project, a number of policy templates have also been created to support organizations as they continue to adapt services to meet the needs of survivors in their community. These templates will act as a starting point for organizations who may wish to begin offering virtual services and they can also serve as a tool for organizations who wish to review or adjust existing policies. In addition to the promising practices guide and policy templates, the consultants have also developed a resource guide that provides external resources on a variety of topics related to virtual service provision, including specific technologies, service provision, security and online safety. The resources will be available online in fall, 2022.



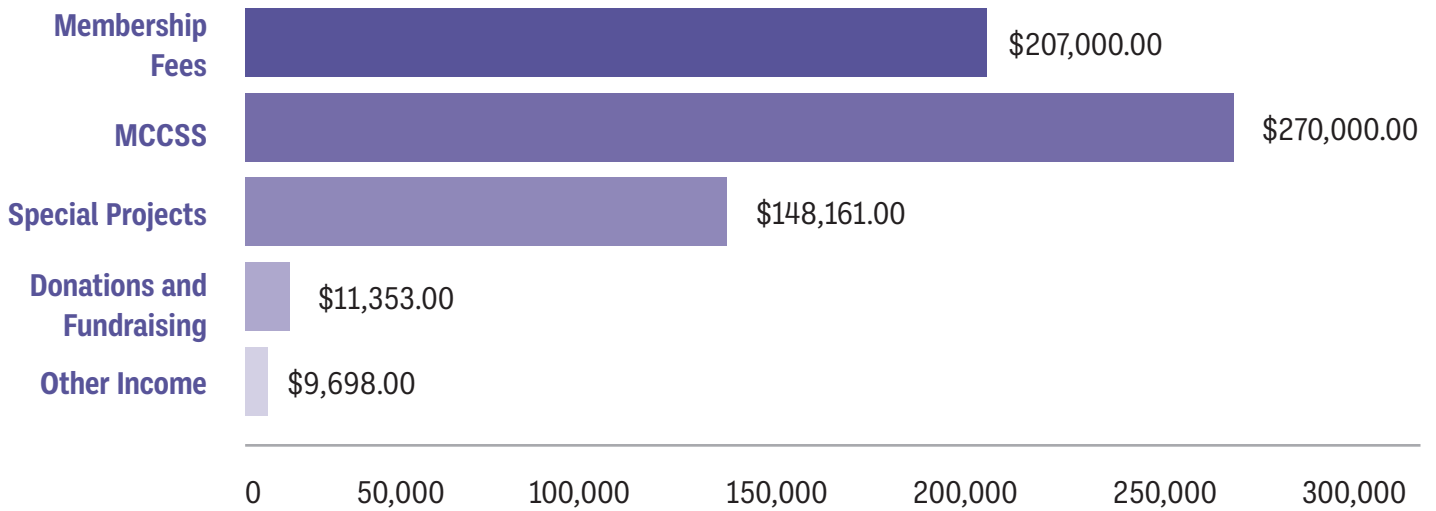


# FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

## OAITH 2021-2022 Expenses



## OAITH 2021-2022 Revenues



**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
\$559,724.00



**TOTAL REVENUE**  
\$647,162.00

## With Tremendous Appreciation to Our Donors in 2021-2022

**AMAPCEO**  
10,000.00

### Students in 2021-2022

**Yasmine Youssef**

University of Toronto, Masters Social Work

**Public Good Initiative**

University of Toronto, Masters Public Policy

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### 2020-2021 Funder Profile



**Ontario** 

Ministry of Children,  
Community and  
Social Services

**Canadian  
Women's Foundation**

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### Partnerships & Collaborations

**Action ontarienne contre la violence  
faite aux femmes**

**Building A Bigger Wave**

**Centre for Research on Violence  
Against Women and Children**

**University of Guelph**

**Lakehead University**



I had the pleasure of completing my MSW placement this year at OAITH. It was an incredible learning opportunity and a great experience working with a passionate and driven organization focused on addressing the real needs of survivors and the VAW sector in Ontario. This included how they were reflexive and responsive to not only what was going on locally and globally, but also to the needs that arose through meetings with members, such as the mental health struggles of front-line staff or the staffing challenges they are currently facing. I was able to support the team on current projects including a Harm Reduction survey, some new online courses, an op-ed on criminalization and femicide, and the monthly femicide reports. They also allowed me opportunities to explore personal and professional interests on disaggregated race-based data collection in Ontario VAW shelters. While I had worked with OAITH as a member, it was a wonderful experience to be part of the team and see the work being done and the effort put into creating a stronger VAW sector, especially post-COVID.

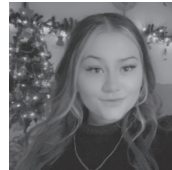
**- Yasmine Youssef**

# ACKNOWLEDGING THE OAITH TEAM AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## OAITH Team



**Executive Director**  
Marlene Ham



**Policy & Research Coordinator**  
Lauren Hancock



**Learning & Development Coordinator**  
Amber Wardell



**Digital Office Support**  
Sherece Taffe

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## 2021 2022 OAITH Board Members



**President**  
Arlene McCalla  
*Interval House*



**Vice-President**  
Sue Weir  
*Napanee Interval House*



**Treasurer**  
Melanie Ducharme  
*Pavilion Women's Centre*



**Secretary/  
Chair of Membership**  
Kendall Trembath  
*Women's Shelter,  
Saakaate House Inc.*



**Designated Director**  
Jeanine George  
*Aboriginal Shelters  
of Ontario*



**General Director**  
Abi Ajibolade  
*The Redwood*



**North**  
Jennifer Camberlin  
*New Starts for Women*



**East**  
Sandy Watson-Moyles  
*Three Oaks*



**Toronto**  
Carol Latchford  
*The Red Door*



**West**  
Jessie Rodger  
*Anova*



**Central**  
Sly Castaldi  
*Guelph - Wellington  
Women in Crisis*

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OAITH



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