



1000 Women Supported



**Luke's Place**  
**Annual Impact Report**  
**2020-2021**





## About Luke's Place

Luke's Place Support & Resource Centre for Women & Children is an award-winning non-profit centre of excellence devoted to improving the safety and experience of women and their children as they proceed through the complex family court system after fleeing an abusive relationship. We are the only stand-alone family law support centre in Canada for women who have been subjected to intimate partner violence. We provide direct services to hundreds of women and their children every year and share our expertise with thousands of service providers through training programs, resources, tools, research, and mentoring.

## Mission & Vision

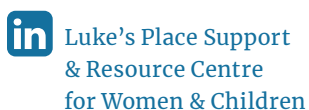
Luke's Place mission is to work with women\* who have been subjected to abuse to support them and their children through the family law process. We provide women, their children, and their communities with specialized services, resources and information about family law and woman abuse. Luke's Place envisions a family law system that promotes healthy, safe families, living free from abuse and the threat of abuse.

## Land Acknowledgement

Luke's Place operations are located on land that is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Scugog Island First Nation.

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Oshawa, Ontario L1H 4K5  
905-728-0978  
1-866-516-3116

[LukesPlace.ca](https://LukesPlace.ca)  
[LukesPlaceTraining.ca](https://LukesPlaceTraining.ca)  
[FamilyCourtAndBeyond.ca](https://FamilyCourtAndBeyond.ca)  
[Admin@LukesPlace.ca](mailto:Admin@LukesPlace.ca)



\* We use the term women to include all self-identified women (including two-spirited, cisgender or transgender women) 16 years of age and older.

# Executive Message

2020 was an unprecedented year in so many ways. Luke's Place rose to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and excelled in delivering on our commitment to provide critical family court support services to women and information, resources and training to their advocates.

As the pandemic emergency measures were unfolding, we immediately transitioned our direct services for women in Durham, without interruption, from in-person to phone and video conferencing. Our experience developing and operating the Virtual Legal Clinic (VLC) prepared us to do this quickly and effectively. At the same time, we expanded the VLC to provide free family law advice to all Ontario women subjected to intimate partner violence (previously offered primarily to women in rural and remote communities). Our adaptability ensured that despite it all, we supported more women than ever before.

And women needed our support. As statistics and reports highlighted, violence against women increased and intensified under COVID-19. To raise awareness about this Shadow Pandemic, we participated in over 25 media interviews with local, provincial, and national outlets. We led and participated in consultations about the pandemic's impact with colleagues and decision-makers, collaborating on efforts to support women and children.

The pandemic also dramatically impacted court operations and many court-related services. Community and court-based service providers needed up-to-date information and training. Collaborating with our partners, we trained more than 1200 trusted intermediaries, developed over fifty pandemic-related resources and published 100+ articles on our blog, including summaries of dozens of recent case decisions. We supported Ontario's frontline VAW responders by creating a virtual community of care and connection.

## Thank You

Special thanks go out to our current and new donors. We were overwhelmed with your generosity at the onset of the pandemic and your continued support.

## Donors and Funders

Ministry of the Attorney General Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division

The Law Foundation of Ontario

Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE; formerly Status of Women Canada)

The Canadian Women's Foundation

Durham Community Foundation – Emergency Community Support Fund

Durham Community Foundation – Ajax Fund

Whitby Mayor's Community Development Fund

City of Pickering Mayor's Gala Fund

Municipality of Clarington

United Way of Durham – Emergency Community Support Fund

The George Lunan Foundation

The Calvin and Frances Hamm Foundation

Ontario Realtors Care Foundation

Association of Management, Administrative, and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario



## Donors and Funders Con't

Ontario Power Generation  
Lundin Mining Company  
Springtide Resources Inc.  
Rotary of Whitby Sunrise  
Rotary Club of Ajax  
Cannington Lionness Club  
Knights of Columbus  
Council No 11098  
Newcastle Lions Club  
Ajax Lions Club  
Durham Region  
Labour Council  
Durham Region  
Association of Realtors  
Ontario Alpha Delta Kappa  
M Boutique  
Faith United Church  
Daughters of Isabella St.  
Bernadette Circle #1408  
Christ Memorial  
(Anglican) Church  
Pickering Village United  
Church Women  
Oshawa Community  
Credit Union  
St. Mark's United  
Church Women  
Knights of Columbus  
Council No 11098  
100 Men of Clarington  
Gore Mutual (Matching  
Donor – Canada Helps  
Partner Giving Program  
– COVID-19 Community  
Care Fund)  
The Glass Slipper  
GelMoment by Valene  
CMI  
Deloitte Canada

## Message from the Executive Director

Amidst the evolving pandemic landscape, our systemic work continued. We monitored the progress of Bills 161 and 207 and analyzed their impact on women who are dealing with abuse. We presented to the Justice Committees for these bills and sought and received many endorsements from Ontario's women's sector for our submissions through our newly launched Feminist Law and Policy Reform Coalition. We submitted comments to the Law Society of Ontario on the Family Legal Service Provider License Consultation Paper and made verbal and written presentations to the province's Fall Budget Consultation at which we spoke about the importance of the Family Court Support Worker Program.

Our success this year is contingent upon many things: the commitment of our pro bono lawyers who share their expertise in our clinics; the generosity of donors who stepped up impressively; capacity-building support from The Law Foundation of Ontario and the Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada; and most importantly, our awesome team of passionate and tireless staff who have gone above and beyond to protect women's access to justice in these unprecedented times.



**Jacqueline Long**  
**President**



**Carol Barkwell**  
**Executive Director**

## 2020-21 Board of Directors

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# Spotlight

## Legal Advice Clinics

Woman abuse survivors encounter several barriers when accessing the justice system under ‘normal’ circumstances. In March of 2020, the pandemic and provincial stay at home orders created heightened dangers for women as they were forced to isolate with their abuser. Recognizing potentially dangerous gaps for women seeking legal advice and support we quickly made the following changes to our already responsive and innovative legal clinic services:

- Transitioned our Durham Pro Bono Legal Clinic to a virtual platform and expanded our roster to support women with emergency matters
- Increased accessibility to our Virtual Legal Clinic to any woman in Ontario fleeing abuse

Our experience and expertise in providing services through both clinics enabled us to be responsive and innovative in our approach. Luke’s Place was awarded the **2020-21 Victim Services Award of Distinction** by the Ministry of the Attorney General for the expansion of our Virtual Legal Clinic in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of these successful clinic enhancements and seeing an opportunity to streamline our efforts, we merged the clinics to operate as one Legal Clinic supporting women across Ontario. This year saw 314 summary advice consultations provided to women by 42 volunteer lawyers in our Legal Clinic.

**“Rise is DELIGHTED to salute our friends at Luke’s Place, recognized by the Attorney General with 2021’s Victim Services Award of Distinction! They do amazing work and were generous with expertise and resources when Rise was getting started. Richly deserved! Kudos!”**

– Rise Women’s Legal Centre, BC

**42** pro bono lawyers

**“This is a great initiative to help women who have gone through abuse and require the emotional and legal support to navigate through the court process.”**

—Legal Clinic Client

**314** consultations completed across the province

36

community  
organization  
partners

“The meeting that I had this morning with the Luke’s Place Legal Support Worker was incredible. She was very supportive and understanding, took the time to listen to my concerns and gave me a clear direction as to what my options/rights were. Please tell her thank you so incredibly much for taking the time to speak to me. She is amazing, and I appreciated it so much!”

—Legal Clinic Client

Every day at  
least one woman  
accesses our legal  
clinic services

“We are honoured to have been nominated by Frankie Wood, Partner at Wood Gold LLP and Executive Member of the Family Law Section of the Ontario Bar Association and selected for this award by the Ministry of the Attorney General. It spotlights the incredible contributions of the lawyers who volunteer their services, our own clinic team, and our service partners across the province who have worked so hard during the pandemic to make sure abuse survivors have access to legal services.”

—Carol Barkwell, Executive Director

## Role of Legal Support Workers (LSWs)

Legal Support Workers (LSWs) play a key role in the Legal Clinic. Every woman attending a virtual consultation receives essential wrap-around support from a Luke’s Place Legal Support Worker or a support worker from a partner organization in the women’s local community. These services include:

- Conducting intake needs assessments, providing information about the family law process and engaging women in safety planning
- Producing case summaries for lawyers prior to Clinic appointments
- Providing emotional support during the appointment
- Taking notes for women to refer back to
- Assisting women in following through on the legal advice received
- Providing referrals to specialized, local community services

## How to Connect to the Luke’s Place Legal Advice Clinic:

Call us: (905)728-0978 ext. 235

Toll free: 1-866-516-3116 ext. 235

Or email us at [Projectco@LukesPlace.ca](mailto:Projectco@LukesPlace.ca)



# The COVID-19 Impact on Women's Access to Justice

- Public health measures resulted in many women being forced into isolation with their abuser, making it even more difficult to seek family law assistance and support
- Changing public health restrictions which impacted court operations and services associated with the courts, meant that women with family law issues and their advocates needed frequent updates. Many women faced challenges engaging in the newly virtual family law system
- Limited and uncertain access to in-person court related services created additional barriers for women needing to address custody, access, and support issues. With many family courts being available for urgent and emergency matters only, some abusers stopped following separation agreements as a tool to further control women

## How We Responded

- Increased capacity to respond to women's family law needs pre and post separation
- Expanded legal advice clinic services provincially
- Supported women in filing Urgent/Emergency motions
- Consulted with the courts, lawyers, front-line workers, and women on a regular basis, reported on current case decisions, developed tools, and posted regular updates to our website and social media
- Developed 177 resources and trainings

**63%** increase  
in requests for  
service from  
July-September

**177**  
Developed  
resources and  
trainings



# Spotlight Advocacy

The pandemic and significant federal and provincial law reform activity has kept our advocacy plate more than full for the past year. In Summer 2020, we created a provincial Feminist Law and Policy Reform Advocacy Coalition, which has **84 member organizations** from across Ontario, with which we have worked closely.

## Key pandemic-specific advocacy efforts have included:

- Discussions with the Offices of the Chief Justices about the needs of gender-based violence survivors for access to timely hearings, safety concerns related to remote hearings and the impact of reduced court services
- Discussions with Legal Aid Ontario about eligibility criteria as well as challenges in accessing duty counsel and summary legal advice services during the pandemic
- Correspondence with the Office of the Chief Justice to raise concerns about the lack of peace bond proceedings in the provincial court system

## More general law reform advocacy efforts have included:

- Discussions with the federal Minister of Justice about implementation of the revised *Divorce Act*
- Development and submission of a brief advocating for revisions to the *Children's Law Reform Act* to align it with the *Divorce Act*
- Appearance before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy with respect to *CLRA revisions*
- Contributions to the development of provincial Private Member's Bill, *Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Act*
- Discussions on the national level about the possible criminalization of coercive controlling behaviours
- Leadership role in the development of the *Roadmap to a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence*
- Consultation to the Law Society of Ontario regarding their proposed model for Family Legal Services Provider (FLSP)
- We have also been approached by national, regional, and local media at an unprecedented level to talk about violence against women as well as needed changes.



# Supporting those who Support Women

Luke's Place continues to develop high quality training and resources for women's advocates. During the pandemic, we have been especially committed to sharing our expertise and hosting events that allow others to share theirs.

**"Thank you for everything you do for the women and children in this community and beyond. We are proud and humbled to be working alongside you."**

- YWCA Durham

This year we trained 1,223 trusted intermediaries on family law issues that women deal with as they leave an abusive relationship, through webinars, a virtual conference and online training. Our audiences included shelter workers, Family Court Support Workers, victim service staff, community workers, lawyers and mediators.

**"I appreciated that the practical exercises [in the course] were not always so obvious. It is so often that in practice the challenges we are faced with are not clear. I also appreciate having [The Best Practices Manual for Lawyers] that I can reference again and again as I work with clients."**

- Lawyer, on our accredited online training for lawyers

Many trainings focused on providing family law support to women during the pandemic. We also trained advocates on changes to the *Divorce Act* and the *Children's Law Reform Act* that pertain to post-separation parenting arrangements for children.

**"Just a big THANK YOU to all for keeping us connected and for your continued support during these uncertain and unpredictable times. THANK YOU!"**

- Service provider

Trained

1,223

intermediaries on family law issues

156

Partnerships:

84

Coalition members

72

Other partners/coalitions



100<sup>+</sup>  
blog articles

25  
media  
appearances

## Supporting those who Support Women

As the trainers for Ontario's Family Court Support Worker Program, we hosted 3 webinars on legal support under COVID-19 in April, May and June, 2020. Over the year we summarized 39 court decisions made by family court judges as operations evolved and developed 17 pandemic-related resources for workers.

We transformed the 8th Annual Gathering for Family Court Support Workers (FCSWs) into a virtual event. **63 FCSWs** from across the province attended and were thrilled to have the opportunity to re-connect with one another. **16 new FCSWs** were introduced to the FCSW program in a separate New Worker virtual training.

**"I really appreciate the work Luke's Place provides for both women and supporting the [Family Court Support Workers] especially over this past year working within Covid-19 times."**

- Family Court Support Worker, southwestern Ontario

We posted over 100 articles to our blog, more than half related to the pandemic. Working with Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) we recorded 7 webinar presentations on a range of family law and safety issues for women.

**"I just wanted to give you feedback on one of my most useful resources, *Family Court and Beyond*. It goes everywhere with me and is always out on my desk. Thank you so much for providing us with such great material in easy language. The hard work Luke's Place puts in for us is greatly appreciated. Thanks!"**

- Service provider, northwestern Ontario



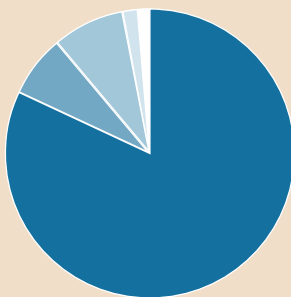
# Finances

Excerpts taken from audited Financial Statements prepared by Dawn Flett & Associates and approved June 23, 2021. A complete financial statement is available upon request.

## Breakdown of Revenue

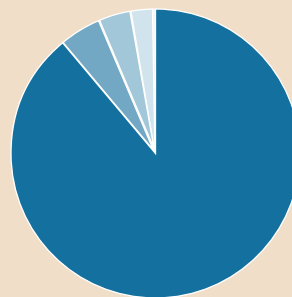
- GRANT FUNDING
- DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING
- FOUNDATION GRANTS
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- OTHER

2021



TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,129,769

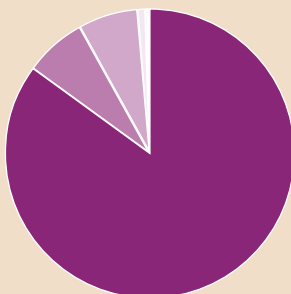
2020



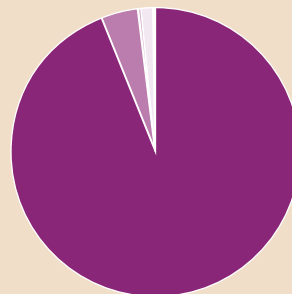
TOTAL REVENUE: \$954,533

## Breakdown of Expenses

- GRANT RELATED EXPENSES
- FOUNDATION GRANT EXPENSES
- WAGES AND BENEFITS
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- PROGRAM AND RESOURCE COSTS
- AMORTIZATION
- OFFICE AND GENERAL



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,089,959



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$903,627

NET REVENUE OVER EXPENSES:

\$39,810

\$50,906

## Deferred Revenue

	OPENING BALANCE	GRANT RECEIVED	EXPENSED CURRENTLY	CLOSING BALANCE
Women and Gender Equality Canada		\$141,050	\$141,050	
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	\$18,564		\$18,564	
Ministry of Attorney General		\$491,300	\$491,300	
Law Foundation of Ontario	\$99,234	\$220,000	\$175,750	\$143,484
United Way Centraide Canada		\$101,300	\$101,300	
TOTAL	\$117,798	\$953,650	\$927,964	\$143,484

## Expenditures

	2021	2020
Insurance	\$6,590	\$6,271
Program and resource costs	\$63,915	\$86,113
Office and general	\$8,093	\$12,068
Occupancy costs	\$34,143	\$34,201
Wages and benefits	\$618,369	\$522,359
TOTAL	\$927,943	\$850,273