



BUILDING A  
CULTURE OF

# Safety

2021-2022 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

## Mission and Vision

Luke's Place works 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.

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

Luke's Place offices are located on traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.

## 2021-22, IN BRIEF:

- Returned to the office following COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Expanded our board province-wide, reflecting our scope.
- Took our "After She Leaves" program virtual, allowing women's advocates greater access to vital tools and training.

# Message from our Executive

Where 2020 marked rising to the occasion in the face of a global pandemic, 2021 challenged us to adapt to the new long-term realities it left in its wake.

For Luke's Place, 2021-22 was a period of exciting growth.

Through our four areas of action – service to women, knowledge mobilization, research, and advocacy — we continued to support women as they navigated the current reality of the family court system, and worked to change the system so that the safety and well-being of women and children will be even more effectively protected in the future.

Central to our work this year were updates to our resources to reflect changes to the *Divorce Act* and Ontario's *Children's Law Reform Act (CLRA)* as well as ongoing system process changes. Thanks to generous grants, we were able to expand our legal services, knowledge mobilization and advocacy efforts to better support women province-wide as they sought guidance in response to these changes to the law and systems.

Organizationally, we looked to the future. We developed a new strategic plan to guide us through the next ten years. We are also happy to see each other in the office again. We are adjusting to our "new normal" by adapting our physical space and implementing a hybrid support model so that we can once again safely serve women in person, as well as via phone and online.

None of this would have been possible without our outstanding volunteers, our wonderful and dedicated staff who have worked over the past two years to help ensure that physical distancing is no barrier to women's access to justice, and the many donors and funders who helped us increase our capacity across every pillar of our organization.



Aparna Dixit  
Incoming President



Carol Barkwell  
Executive Director

**“My worker helped me put together a safety plan that looked at every angle and supported every fear I had.”**

—Luke’s Place Service User

## Finding a Path to Safety

She faces psychological violence at home. Her partner controls her financially, and seeks to harm her children. She may be experiencing physical violence. She is isolated from the support of family and friends. She is a racialized newcomer to Canada. She has limited access to financial resources. Despite their differences, what every woman we serve at Luke’s Place has in common is that she is about to navigate the Ontario legal system while she enters into the most lethal time of her life: the process of leaving an abuser.

During this crucial time, our Legal Support Workers empower women to navigate the family law system as safely as possible. This includes supporting her to present evidence of abuse in court, completing a comprehensive safety plan, accompanying her to legal appointments and court, and providing her the tools to help her regain control. This year, our Legal Support programs once again met extraordinary challenges presented by the pandemic.

### IN 2021-22, LUKE’S PLACE:

- Supported 873 women as they safely navigated the family court through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Facilitated 239 pro-bono legal clinic appointments completed by 43 lawyers who collectively volunteered 309 hours.
- Expanded to meet the needs of more women across a larger region:
  - Women from across Ontario attended Family Law Information Workshops online, broadening its reach.
  - In response to community needs, we made valuable additions to our women’s direct services team, including more Legal Support Workers and the new positions of Program and Intake Coordinators, Legal Services Director, and Staff Lawyer.



**“It is an extremely relevant course for the work I do and having access to it has been a positive experience. Any women’s advocate could benefit from it.”**

—After She Leaves online training participant

# Building a Community that Recognizes and Supports Her

She turns to a social worker. She finds a few precious minutes alone to look up information on a search engine. She confides in a friend, a lawyer, a counselor, a community service worker.

A safer community for women experiencing abuse means taking away that sense of isolation: training advocates within the community to understand both intimate partner violence and Ontario family law, and making sure that information is accessible to everyone who needs it. This is the cornerstone of our knowledge mobilization pillar, which continues to grow and adapt with changes in technology, law, and access that have only increased with the onset of the pandemic.



## IN 2021-22, LUKE’S PLACE:

- Trained 1200+ women’s advocates across Canada including facilitating the 9th Annual Family Court Support Worker (FCSW) Conference “The Gathering” and “New Worker Training” virtually.
- Raised awareness of increased community need and resources through 13 media engagements and 59 blog posts.
- Created new tools and resources to help advocates aid women through changes to the *Divorce Act* and *Ontario’s Children’s Law Reform Act (CLRA)*:
  - Conducted and recorded webinars for future access: *The Best Interests of the Child Test, Making the Divorce Act Work for Women, and Ontario’s New Children’s Law Reform Act.*
- Developed a hybrid training for advocates to accompany the 3rd edition of the *After She Leaves Resource Manual*.

**“Increased access to justice for survivors is essential.”**

—Pamela Cross, Luke’s Place Legal Director, addressing the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women

# Advocating for Her Success in the Legal System

Her safety plan is in place. She’s consulted with a lawyer. She’s worked through a parenting plan with our toolkit and understands what to expect during the legal process. But how well is the legal process working for her?

Luke’s Place advocates at all levels of government, with legal stakeholders and with partner organizations to help ensure safe, and equitable legal outcomes for women experiencing abuse. This means making sure that they are recognized as a survivor of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence from before they enter the courtroom. 2021- 22 continued to present significant challenges to women proceeding through the court system owing to changes in court and related services operations and processes, as well as pandemic-related scarcity.

## IN 2021-22, LUKE’S PLACE:

- Co-Chaired the Justice and Legal System Working Group of the Women’s Shelters Canada Roadmap to the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender-Based Violence.
- Presented our recommendations to end intimate partner violence to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.
- Continued our advocacy regarding changes to parenting provisions in the *Divorce Act* and *Children’s Law Reform Act*, and with Legal Aid Ontario regarding survivors of intimate partner violence.
- Helped ensure women’s safety through the legal process by advocating to address the shortage of peace bond availability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supported the campaign to expand access to record suspensions (pardons).
- Consulted with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada with respect to proposed changes to regulations about intimate partner violence.



**“When the invisible network of control over a woman’s life comes into view, the missing puzzle pieces fall into place.”**

—Allana Haist, Feminist Public Interest Fellow, University of Ottawa

## Learning From Her, Learning For Her

After a long and demanding process, she’s ready to move forward and start a new chapter, for herself and for her children. But her experiences in the legal system—the barriers to safety and justice she overcame—are now making a difference in the lives of others who experience abuse and are about to embark on their own path toward safety.

A culture of safety means learning from the experiences of survivors of intimate partner violence and gender based violence—accumulating a bank of knowledge that helps make positive change in the legal system and the lives of women and children. Luke’s Place supports vital research that paves the way for a safer Ontario.

### IN 2021- 22, LUKE’S PLACE SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH:

- **Launch of Community Engaged Family Court** research observations in Durham, Hamilton, Brantford, Thunder Bay, and Lanark County.
- **Article: “Stopping Coercive Control by Criminalization: the Implications for Family Law,”** Allana Haist, Feminist Public Interest Fellow, University of Ottawa: examines the impact of Bill C-247 and criminalization of coercive control through a family law lens.
- **Article published in *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*: “The Degendering of Male Perpetrated Intimate Partner Violence Against Female Partners in Ontario Family Law Courts,”** Mavis Morton, Tanja Samardzic, Pamela Cross, Shannon Johnstone, Leslie Vesely, and Melisa Choubak. Critical case review that examines judges’ gender bias and language in family court.

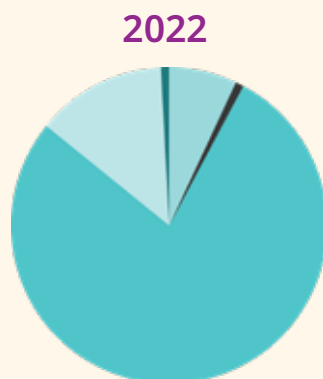


# Financials

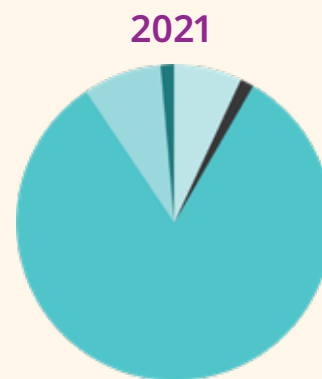
Excerpts taken from audited Financial Statements prepared by Dawn Flett & Associates and approved June 13, 2022. A complete financial statement is available upon request.

## BREAKDOWN OF REVENUE

- Grant funding 78%
- Foundation grants 13%
- Donations and fundraising 7%
- Education and training 0.8%
- Other 0.7%



**TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,448,485**



**TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,129,769**

## BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES

- Grant related expenses 84%
- Foundation grant expenses 14%
- Wages and benefits 0.8%
- Professional services 0.4%
- Office and general 0.06%
- Amortization 0.03%
- Program and resource costs 0%



**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,340,033**



**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,089,959**

**NET REVENUE OVER EXPENSES: \$108,452**

**\$39,810**

| <b>DEFERRED REVENUE</b>                             | Opening balance  | Grant received     | Expensed currently | Closing balance  |
|---|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Women and Gender Equality Canada                    |                  | \$252,742          | \$252,742          |                  |
| Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services |                  | \$175,000          | \$98,397           | \$76,603         |
| Ministry of Attorney General                        |                  | \$498,800          | \$498,800          |                  |
| Law Foundation of Ontario                           | \$143,484        | \$206,000          | \$167,578          | \$181,906        |
| Canadian Family Justice Fund                        |                  | \$75,000           | \$75,000           |                  |
| Department of Justice                               |                  | \$36,510           | \$36,510           |                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$143,484</b> | <b>\$1,244,052</b> | <b>\$1,129,027</b> | <b>\$258,509</b> |

| <b>EXPENDITURES</b>        | 2022               | 2021             |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Insurance                  | \$7,176            | \$6,590          |
| Program and resource costs | \$155,042          | \$63,915         |
| Office and general         | \$1,424            | \$8,093          |
| Occupancy costs            | \$30,285           | \$34,143         |
| Professional services      | \$192,030          | \$196,833        |
| Wages and benefits         | \$743,070          | \$618,369        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>\$1,129,027</b> | <b>\$927,943</b> |

# Thank You for Creating A Culture of Safety in 2021-22

To our many volunteers who gave their time, energy and talent to helping women and families access justice, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

A special thank you to the granting agencies and donors who helped us improve the lives of women and families:

- Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General
- Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada
- Department of Justice
- The Law Foundation of Ontario
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- The McColl-Early Foundation
- The Calvin & Frances Hamm Foundation
- Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB) via Ontario Realtors Care Foundation
- Durham Community Foundation
- 100 Women Who Care Ajax Pickering Whitby
- Town of Whitby
- Ajax Mayor's Gala
- Pickering Mayor's Gala
- Unifor Local 222
- Canadian Federation of University Women Oshawa & District
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation District 13
- Retired Teachers of Ontario, District 28
- Ajax Oshawa Peterborough Unifor Retired Workers Council
- Durham Region Labour Council
- Walmart Canada
- Ontario Power Generation
- Re/MAX Hallmark
- Oshawa Community Credit Union
- Rotary Club of Ajax
- Oshawa West Lions Club
- Daughters of Isabella, St. Bernadette Circle #1408
- Christ Memorial Anglican Church
- Pickering Village United Church Women
- Faith United Church
- & our many generous individual donors

