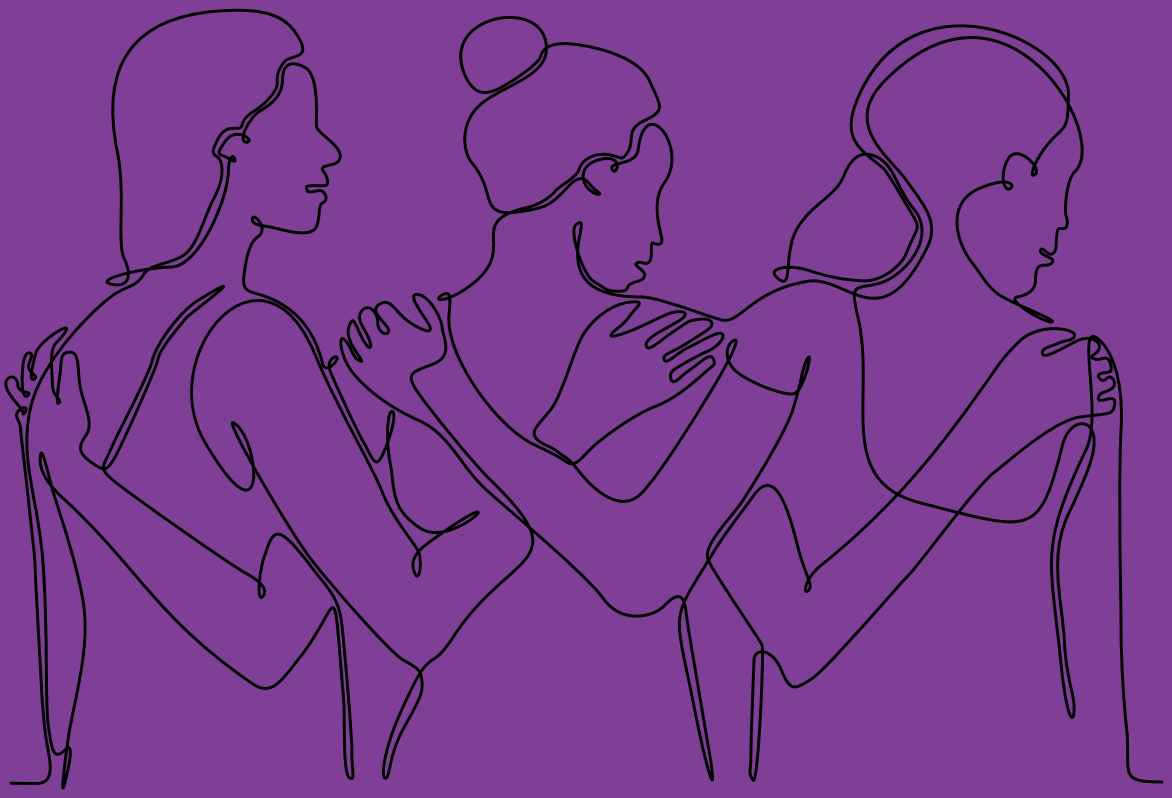
Luke's Place

Annual Report

2025-2026



Charitable Registration Number
88761-1218-RR0001

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Our Story



The story of Luke's Place is deeply rooted in the tragic loss of a child and the community's collective response to ensure no other child faces the same fate.

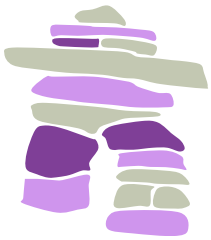
Luke's Place was born from the community's concern for women's safety in the family court system, especially after the tragic murder of Luke, a child whose father was granted unsupervised visitation. The community's initiative to gather together and address the risks faced by women in the family court system led to the establishment of Luke's Place.

Luke’s Place has since become a beacon of hope and support for women and their children navigating the family law process after fleeing abusive relationships.

Mission Statement

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 intimate partner violence.

Acknowledging the Land



Luke’s Place acknowledges the lands and people of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, which is covered under the Williams Treaties.

We are situated on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, a branch of the greater Anishinaabeg Nation, which includes Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi.

Message From Our Executive

Luke's Place remained focused on strengthening responses to intimate partner violence, supporting frontline professionals, and ensuring survivors have access to meaningful legal and community supports.

Through our frontline services, advocacy initiatives, training programs, and knowledge mobilization efforts, we continued to see both the urgent need for this work and the remarkable dedication of those supporting survivors every day. We are deeply grateful to our staff, volunteers, students, partners, and community collaborators whose expertise and commitment made this work possible.

There remains a consistent high demand for our frontline services, both in terms of access to legal support from our Legal Support Workers and access to legal advice from our volunteer and staff lawyers. A substantial proportion of the women who accessed our services did not have a lawyer, highlighting the critical role our Legal Clinic plays for survivors across the province.

A significant milestone was the launch of the national After She Leaves website in January designed to expand access to family law information, advocacy strategies, and practical resources for frontline workers across Canada. Since its launch, this website has already received thousands of visitors and page views.

Our province-wide After She Leaves tour travelled to Sault Ste. Marie, Kingston, London, Thunder Bay and Brampton to deliver impactful two-day training focused on strengthening local capacity to support survivors navigating family court. We updated tools and resources for survivors and their advocates, including launching a new Emergency Motions Course and updating our Tech Safety Toolkit to include more family-law-focused resources.

Luke's Place continued to play an important role in advocating for systemic change to the family law system. We concluded a multi-year research project and released an executive summary, Diverse Victim-Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence and the Ontario Family Law System, highlighting the barriers survivors face and making various recommendations for change.

As we reflect on this year, we remain inspired by the resilience of survivors and the dedication of those working to support them. Together, we will continue striving toward a future where all women and children can live free from violence and have access to a family court system that is responsive to their needs for safety and access to justice.

Donna Babbs
Board President

Emily Murray
Acting Co-Executive Director

Sheri Rice
Acting Co-Executive Director

What We Do

Luke's Place is an award-winning non-profit organization solely devoted to improving the safety and experience of women and their children as they proceed through the family law process after fleeing an abusive partner.

Centre of Excellence

The only stand-alone family law support centre of excellence for women who have been subjected to abuse in Canada, Luke's Place provides direct services to over a thousand women and their children in Ontario every year.

We share our expertise with thousands of service providers across Ontario and Canada through training, resources, and mentoring. We also work with academics to conduct research and collaborate widely to advocate for improved access to justice for women and their children.



Women's Direct Services

Legal Support Services

Our Women's Direct Services help women subjected to intimate partner violence navigate the family law system by providing coordinated legal information, family court support, access to legal advice, legal education, and practical resources that reduce barriers to accessing justice. Our services include:

- ✓ Safety planning
- ✓ Family law information and legal system navigation
- ✓ Assistance with court document preparation
- ✓ Accompaniment to legal appointments and court proceedings
- ✓ Informational Workshops – Family Law Information Workshops & Early Information and Safety Workshops
- ✓ Support with Emergency Motions
- ✓ Family Law Resource Room
- ✓ Referrals



We supported **1,172** women, an increase from the previous year

Over the past year, **1,172** unique women accessed Luke's Place services, which was an increase from the previous year. **685** new women accessed Luke's Place support, which was a **4%** increase, with **77%** from Durham Region and **23%** from communities across Ontario. **631** women completed service during this year.

This past year has seen an expanded service capacity and growing demand to have emotional and practical support while attending legal meetings and court proceedings (accompaniments). **226** women were provided a supportive presence in over **300** meetings and court proceedings.

Use of the Family Law Resource Room, a safe space for women to work on court documents, complete legal research, and attend virtual court, increased significantly last year, with the space used a total of **61** times.

24 Early Information and Safety Workshops were delivered throughout the year and equipped women with knowledge and tools for navigating the family law process as safely as possible.

> "Because of you, I have been able to move through this chapter with more clarity, courage, and hope than I thought possible. Your care has made a lasting difference in my life. The work you do matters deeply, not just in a practical sense, but in the way it restores dignity, safety, and confidence to the people you support." **Survivor**

Women's Direct Services

Legal Services

Luke's Place operates a Legal Clinic to help unrepresented survivors across Ontario have access to services from a trauma and violence-informed lawyer. Our Legal Clinic offers free summary legal advice from one of our volunteer family lawyers, as well as urgent legal advice and court form drafting from a staff lawyer. Together, these services help women understand their legal rights and options, prepare for family court, and navigate the legal system with greater confidence and support.

The Clinic uses a wraparound model in which women receive coordinated support from both a lawyer and a support worker, ensuring they receive legal guidance and ongoing practical support throughout their family law case. The support worker is either a Luke's Place Legal Support Worker or a support worker from one of our partner organizations across Ontario that works with us to facilitate access to the clinic for women in their local community.

Growing to Meet the Need

Staff Lawyer	Volunteer Lawyer	Growth
273 appointments	**300** summary legal advice appointments	**27%** increase in appointments in Durham Region
158 women received urgent legal services or court form drafting		**47%** increase in appointments in Onario
111% increase over the previous fiscal year	**37%** increase over the previous fiscal year	

54 volunteer family lawyers who made this possible

373+ hours donated of pro bono legal services to women across Ontario

24 public legal education workshops delivered to women throughout the year

52 community partner organizations across Ontario including organizations serving women in rural and remote communities

> My worker connected me with the clinic lawyer, who did a phenomenal job answering my questions and ensuring that I was well informed. She offered great advice and gave me perspective on key points in my case. My worker has always been great in providing me with options and resources to help move my case forward. I appreciate both of them for taking the time to assist me on this journey, and I feel better prepared and less anxious to face what's ahead. Thank you to both of them, and for Luke's Place. **Survivor**
>
> This is an amazing resource for our clients who need questions answered and they feel much better supported after the meeting with the lawyer. **Community Partner - Support Worker**

Knowledge Mobilization

Building Sector Capacity

Luke's Place is helping to build sector capacity by providing training and resources to family court support workers, legal advocates, lawyers, students, and other sector service and advocacy partners. This knowledge mobilization promotes system change for survivors by increasing the knowledge and skills of service providers across the province to provide them with effective, trauma and violence-informed support. We also create practical tools and informational resources for women to help them more safely and effectively navigate the family law process.

Training

400+ women's advocates trained through live, in-person training sessions

500+ professionals registered for our online e-learning courses

Launched new online course on emergency motions for support workers and added new modules to our online course for lawyers

Resources

8 NEW resources developed and shared with Family Court Support Workers

23K+ written resources downloaded

Launched NEW Train the Trainer guide, Community Resource Toolkit, and enhanced our Tech Safety Toolkit

Virtual Reach

100K+users visited Luke's Place websites

400K+ reach across social media accounts

Launched **NEW** National After She Leaves Website, AfterSheLeaves.ca

> Luke's Place resources and training are essential tools for strengthening the response to intimate partner violence across Ontario. By providing trauma-informed, practical, and survivor-centered education, Luke's Place equips professionals with the knowledge and confidence to better support women navigating complex family law and legal systems. **Legal Advocate**

> I would like to see training like this from Luke's Place to be standard in all advocate/ sexual assault treatment centers for staff. I have been in this line of work for almost ten years and was unaware that this was available. I personally believe that one of the largest barriers that we as sexual assault nurses experience is the fear and unknown surrounding the courtroom. If we could improve nurses' knowledge and comfort, I feel our patients' care would be greatly enhanced. Thank you! **Nurse**

13th Annual Gathering & New Worker Training for Family Court Support Workers

Luke's Place hosted its 13th Annual Family Court Support Worker Gathering in November in downtown Toronto, bringing together more than 60 FCSWs from 38 organizations across Ontario for two days of in-person training, collaboration, and connection. In March, we also brought together 28 new FCSWs for a two-day in-person training to provide them with foundational training to support them in their new role.







> The Gathering is always a powerful reminder that we are not alone in this work. The learning and connection we take home make a real difference for the survivors we support. **Family Court Support Worker**

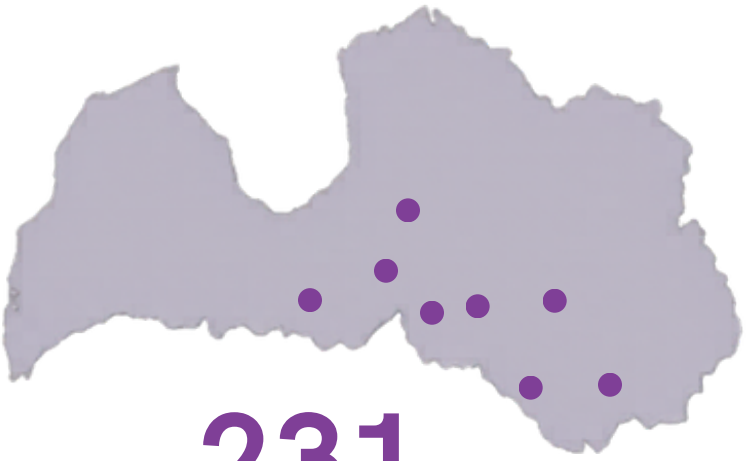
> I thought it was a really good foundation on the role and where to start. Great training! Lots of useful information and resources. **New Worker**

After She Leaves Tour

Over the past two years, Luke's Place has travelled around to communities across Ontario to provide critical training about family law and the family court process to frontline workers who support survivors of intimate partner violence.



Guelph/Parry Sound/Toronto/Kingston
London/Sault Ste. Marie/Thunder Bay/
Brampton



231

FRONTLINE WORKERS TRAINED

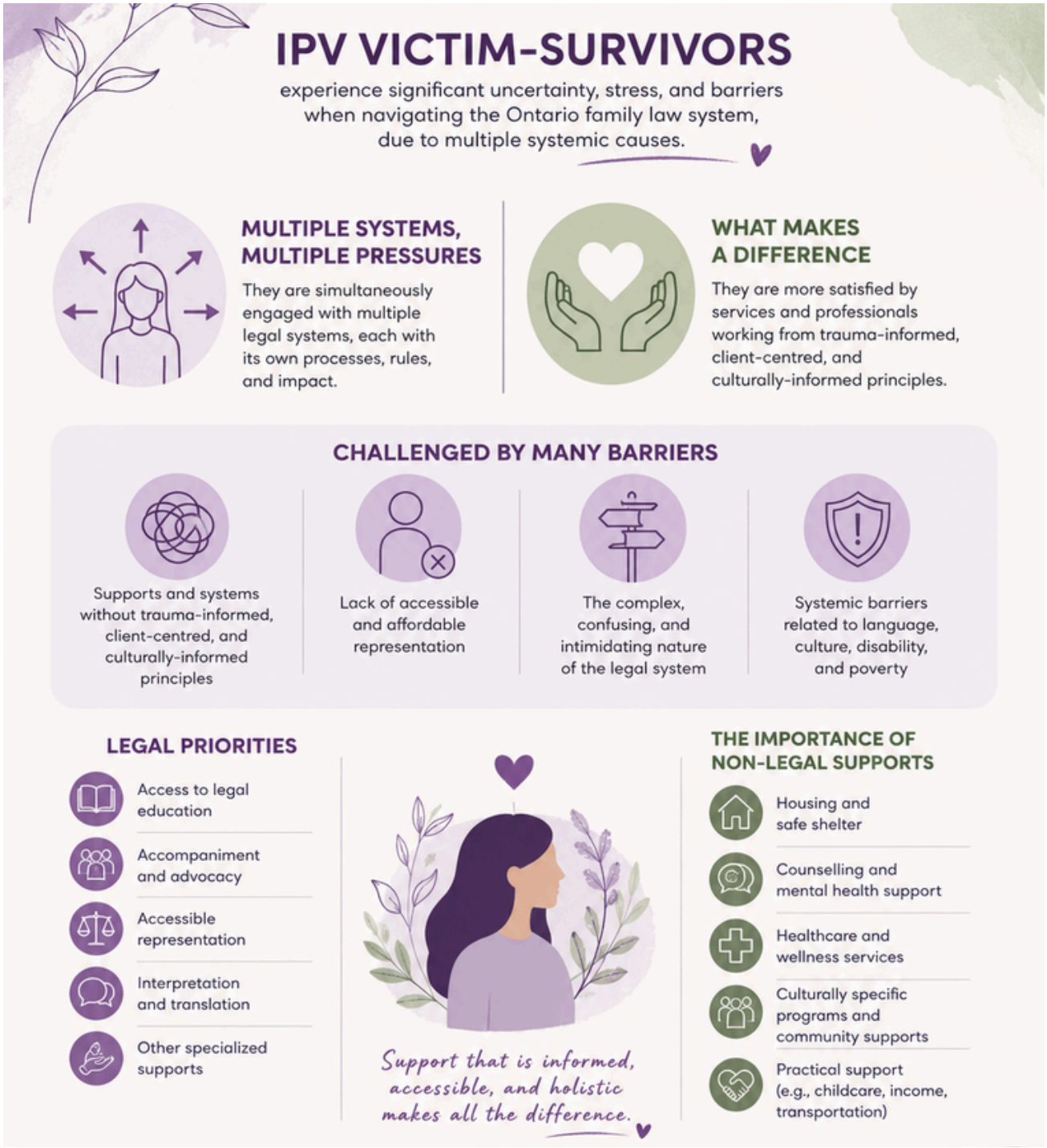
> I found all the content very useful. The practical information I can bring to work is very helpful, such as handling urgent and emergency motions. As well as the child's interests test to know what to focus on in the affidavit and other court paperwork.
> **ASL Participant**
>
> This was an amazing experience with so much information that we can use to support our client base. Thank you for all that you do.
> **ASL Participant**

> As a worker, this training has been very helpful and informative to give me a better understanding of the court system. **ASL Participant**
>
> Very impressed by the presenters ability to effectively explain complex information to those not trained in law. This will be so helpful in supporting women through the family court system. **ASL Participant**

Research

Community Engaged Research on Family Court System

This past year, Luke's Place completed a multiyear community-engaged research project with academic partner Dr. Mavis Morton from the University of Guelph to understand the diverse needs, concerns, and experiences of survivors involved in the family court system.



Advocacy

Advocating for Justice and Safety

Our advocacy work is grounded in what we learn from women and the frontline advocates who support them through our direct services, knowledge mobilization and research. This past year, Luke's Place maintained its leadership role in advancing access to justice for survivors and advocating for changes to the laws and policies that continue to cause harm.

15,000+

Downloads of our advocacy material, including briefs, toolkits and discussion papers

Advocacy in Action

- ✓ Consulted with the provincial government on restraining order legislation to ensure proposed changes would actually improve access for survivors
- ✓ Submitted pre-budget consultation submissions to both the provincial and federal government, calling for more funding to the gender-based violence sector
- ✓ Drafted a brief on Keeping Children Safe Act, which proposes changes to the federal Divorce Act to strengthen protections and outcomes for survivors in family court
- ✓ Participated in provincial and national committees and networks advancing system change
- ✓ Completed media interviews on issues of intimate partner violence and the law
- ✓ Helped convene the 2nd Annual Durham Region Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence
- ✓ Hosted various provincial and federal members of parliament for meetings to discuss the challenges survivors face in family court

> In my years at Luke's Place, I learned a lot about the importance of advocacy to change the legal systems women turn to when they leave an abusive partner. I saw the impact of our work on reforms to both family and criminal law that have made those systems more responsive to the realities of intimate partner violence and on building increased awareness about the issue of IPV on the part of the legal professionals involved in those systems. Central to the integrity and success of the advocacy work that Luke's Place has led and been involved with for more than 20 years are two principles: work for system change must be rooted in the lived experiences of survivors/victims and must be done collaboratively to reflect a wide range of voices and perspectives. **Pamela Cross**

Thank You

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers who gave their time, energy, and talent to help women and families access justice. A special thank you to the granting agencies and donors who helped us improve women's and children's lives. Your generosity enables us to focus on doing what we do best: supporting women and sharing our expertise with service providers across Canada.

1,172 women supported

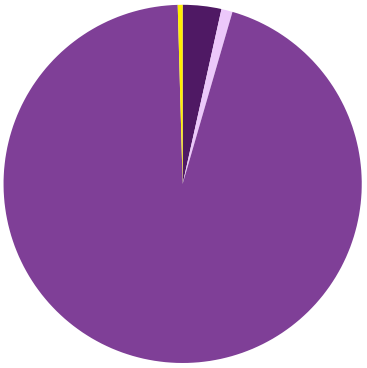
400+ individuals trained

200K+ reach across social media accounts

Financials

Excerpts taken from audited Financial Statements prepared by Dawn Flett & Associates and approved on June 6th, 2026. A complete financial statement is available at LukesPlace.ca.

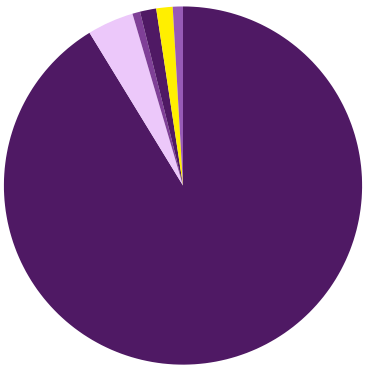
REVENUE



Grant funding	90.09%
Donations and fundraising	8%
Education and training	0.7%
Other	0.4%

TOTAL REVENUE $2,658,469

EXPENSES



Wages and benefits	68.7%
Professional services	15.3%
Program and resources	13.1%
Occupancy	1.7%
Office and general	1.1%
Insurance	0.7%

TOTAL EXPENSES $2,417,924

Board of Directors

Donna Babbs
President & Secretary

Kimberley Gavan
Vice President

Jill D'Souza
Treasurer

Ruth Chun
Director

Nada Johnson
Director

Find us online:

LukesPlace.ca
FamilyCourtandBeyond.ca
AfterSheLeaves.ca
LukesPlaceTraining.ca

LukesPlace1

LukesPlace707

Luke's Place Support & Resource Centre for Women & Children