

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Revenue Canada Charitable Tax: 10777 1727 RR0001

# ANNUAL REPORT 2012 - 2013



novavita  
help. hope. heal.

*Making a difference for 30 years*



Brant United Way





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## Message from the Board President & the Executive Director:

In 1983 when the members of the Pilot Club determined there was a need for a shelter for abused women and their children in Brantford and the county of Brant, the issue of domestic violence had just begun to rear its ugly head in our community. The founding members of Nova Vita knew there was an issue, even though hidden; they also knew that they must do something about it. But, no one realized the scope, depth and severity of the issue of domestic violence; nor did they know about its intergenerational patterns and the deleterious effects domestic violence has on children and infant development.

Today, the World Health Organization estimates that 1 in 4 women in Canada will experience partner violence or sexual violence in her life time.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the 2013 Justice Canada Report identified the total cost of intimate partner violence in Canada to be \$7.4 billion per year (this includes cost estimates for pain and suffering as well as medical care costs and lost productivity).<sup>2</sup> In Canada, the direct costs of intimate partner violence total \$1.9 billion per year.<sup>3</sup> In 2009, 6% of Ontarians reported experiencing spousal violence in their lifetime which translates to approximately 6,000 women and child victims in our community.

It is no wonder that over the past 30 years that Nova Vita has needed to grow and evolve from an 18 bed shelter for abused women and their children to a multi-service organization with over 30 emergency beds. As part of the continuum of services for abused and homeless women and their children – it was also necessary to offer transitional housing and support as well as counselling for victims and perpetrators.

One of Nova Vita's main goals is to respond to the needs of the community – and we have done this time and again. When occupancy rates in our emergency shelter were consistently over 120% - we added an additional 10 beds to accommodate the need; when there was no transitional housing available for women leaving the shelter – we built Maria House – an eight unit transitional housing program. And using feedback from our clients and analyzing client trends, we developed unique programming such as the Caring Families program (serving custodial, non-custodial parents and their children), the Differential Response program (a partnership with Brant Children's Aid Society to conduct joint domestic violence, child welfare assessments), WOW - (abuse groups for older women) and of course,

## In Memory

In Memoriam – Maria Hacking

In March 2013, Nova Vita lost one of its devoted supporters and colorful characters – Maria Hacking. Maria (originally trained as a nurse) was one of the original staff of Nova Vita. She started working as an over-night residential counsellor at the Chatham Street site in October 1983 and later became Supervisor of the Emergency Shelter. Maria remained in that position as Residential Supervisor until her retirement in 2006. Maria later returned to Nova Vita as a casual worker until 2012. In honour of her long standing service, our first transitional housing residence was named for her – Maria House in 2005. Nova Vita always remained close to her heart. Maria will be remembered as the nurturing, no-nonsense, all knowing face of the shelter.

In Memoriam – Evelyn Taylor

Evelyn Taylor was passionate about supporting her clients. In 1987 Evelyn began her career as a residential counsellor and in 2005 she became a Transitional Support Worker where she remained a formidable advocate for her clients and was a well known and respected Nova Vita worker in the court system. Evelyn will be remembered for her commitment to Nova Vita, the positive impact she had on so many women and children in the community and her endless drive for the cause. Her compassionate, feisty approach will be remembered.

In Memoriam – Ian Robb

Ian was a dedicated Nova Vita Board member and Board Treasurer from 2006 to 2013. His dedication to Nova Vita and his sense of humor were evident at every Board meeting. Ian would always be the one to keep the Board meetings interesting and relaxed; he was the Board member you could always rely upon. He will be greatly missed.





Message from our Volunteer Coordinator - Ashley Bye

This past year has been a year of growth and development for the volunteer team at Nova Vita. Not only have we expanded in numbers, but in the level of involvement. Our volunteers often come to us wanting to offer specialized skills and talents, which we have embraced by way of remaining open and flexible. For this reason, we have volunteers helping in every department of the organization.

For example, we have two lawyers on our team who offer free legal advice to our clients, a labour and delivery nurse aiding the public health team in the shelter, and a professional makeup artist offering self-esteem boosting tutorials.

Through patience and persistence, our volunteer program has become an organized and structured system that offers our volunteers an easy and comfortable transition into their selected roles. From recruitment to recognition, we have procedures and policies in place that are designed for successful volunteer management.

Nova Vita staff have been welcoming and supportive to volunteers, as they recognize their importance and contributions. Although volunteers have always been a part of Nova Vita, they are now more than ever, a well recognized extension of the team and an important part of the organization.

During the 2012/2013 fiscal year, our volunteers dedicated an astounding 2,505.5 hours to support us in our efforts to end domestic violence.

To every volunteer who selflessly and enthusiastically put your heart into a project, task or event, please know how truly grateful we are for the generosity shown to our clients and this community. Volunteers have given so many of us the encouragement and energy to move forward with the important work we do here at Nova Vita.

Thank you!

our men’s programming just to name a few.

Nova Vita staff and volunteers have much to be proud of. We are known as a cutting edge women’s organization in the community with excellent, professional programs for abused and homeless women and their children. And perhaps equally as important, we are known as one of the few women’s organizations to offer counselling programs to perpetrators of domestic violence. (It is only recently that the Violence Against Women sector is beginning to recognize the importance of treating perpetrators).

And finally, with the support of a courageous Board of Directors and the hard work of staff, we have waded into the waters of social enterprise and the world of retail, with the opening of Closet Couture in September 2013.

What will the future bring as we look forward? We are not sure. However, the Board of Directors is in the process of developing a revised strategic plan for 2013-2016 – a very exciting and challenging exercise to undertake.

Yet, there are some things that we know for sure: the issue of domestic violence continues to ravage our community in spite of our best efforts; we must become more and more pro-active and creative in developing new and reliable funding sources so that we may keep up with community demand and need; and that we have talented, professional and dedicated staff and volunteers who will do what it takes to ensure that we will continue to “help, hope and heal” our community from the scourge of domestic violence.

Respectfully,

Victoria Malcolm  
Board President

Joy Freeman  
Executive Director

1 McInturff, Kate, CCPA Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, “The Gap in the Gender Gap, Violence Against Women in Canada”, page 5  
2 Ibid, page 6  
3 Ibid, page 6





# Caring Families

The Caring Families Program is a 16 week psycho-educational group treatment program for mothers, fathers and their children. The goal of this program is to prevent escalating domestic conflict by building respectful, empathetic parent communication and to support appropriate child centered parenting practices. The program is both educational and therapeutic in nature.

The desired outcomes for this program are:

- to reduce parental conflict
- to improve parental relationships at an earlier point in domestic conflict
- to improve a child's well-being and
- to mitigate a child's exposure to parental hostility

Our clients report that the Caring Families program was able to help them find hope, help and healing. Here are some of the things that our clients said about their experience in the program:

***"The programme has definitely helped our family as the communication between my ex and I is much better".***

***"Great program. Learned a lot, it was nice to be able to talk and listen to others dealing with the same issues". "The information was very helpful to look at the whole picture. Made me realize some ways that I can help improve myself."***

***"I learned to change my reactions to abusive situations. I learned to be more aware of how my reactions were affecting my children."***

***"Great program. Felt it helped me cope with my situation by listening to others. The program helped my relationship with the boy's father."***

***"Feel it was a great program both for me and the kids. I think handling conflict was the big issue".***



## Men in Heels

### 2012

This event is one of Nova Vita's most important events as it represents a large group of men in our community willing to say we want to see an end to violence against women. They recognize that domestic violence is a community problem and it could happen to their daughter, mother, sister or neighbour. They understand that one of the most important ways to end violence against women and girls is through education and awareness - together we can make a difference!

Our 2nd annual Men in Heels - standing tall against domestic violence event was a resounding success! Over 120 men were willing to sport red high heels to raise awareness of domestic violence in our community. This group of enthusiastic men and boys walked as members of a team, as individuals, and as youth representing local schools. Together they raised \$22,000 - a 55% increase from the previous year.

Even though this group of guys had a great time strutting around getting photos taken, dressing up as pirates or jumping in the air with heels on (not recommended!), they understood the importance of the event. They want to see an end to violence against women in our community. Even though domestic violence this is a very serious topic, these men have found a way to raise awareness and have a great time doing so! We truly appreciate everything you all do for us.





# International Women's Day 2013

The 4th IWD proved to be the best event yet - with over 440 guests in attendance - raising just over \$35,000! This event would not be possible without the generosity of our many event sponsors - guests had the opportunity to win fabulous prizes such as a gift of flight for two from West Jet, two tickets to see Ellen DeGeneres and two tickets to see Jimmy Kimmel Live.

Audience members were captivated by the beautiful and soulful voice of Kim Davis, whose songs offered a glimpse into her tragic life of domestic violence and how music helped her heal and trust in love again. Strong women like Kim, demonstrate the strength and courage it takes to leave a violent relationship and why shelters like Nova Vita are still a vital resource today.

For the second year, we honoured a woman in our community with the Woman of Excellence Award. With over 15 nominations, our selection committee had the tough task of selecting only one winner.

It is an honour to be nominated and these 15 women deserved to be mentioned. Teresa Percival, Sherry Kerr, Jean Anderson, Marilyn McCulloch, Kristin Pass, Nancy Tomkins, Doris Post, Dorothy Calbeck, Giovanna Notarandrea, Dorothy DeVuono, Jacqueline Buscombe, Judy Ham, Stacey Farrant, Susan Swackhammer and Sharon Brooks.



The winner of the 2013 Woman of Excellence Award went to Sharon Brooks. Sharon is a visionary, a problem-solver, and a 'we can do this' person who is renowned for the programs she has created for more than 10,000 children in Brantford.

Sharon's leadership skills transfer into the Equestrian world, where she brought the Canadian Paralympic Equestrian Team to the Athens Olympics in 2004 by first creating – without budget, facilities, or volunteers – an International Paralympic Equestrian Qualifying Event. Sharon is the recipient of several Early Childhood Educator Awards, and was chosen by Fraser Mustard to sit on the original Ontario Council for Early Child Development. Congratulations Sharon!



## NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS

## and family



Millions of women are abused by husbands, boyfriends, or intimate partners each year. Chances are, someone you know – your mother, your sister, friend, co-worker, or neighbour is a victim of woman abuse. How do you know if your friend or family member is being abused?

Bumps and bruises are the most obvious, but not the only signs of abuse. Other ways to recognize abuse are: She is apologetic and makes excuses for his behaviour or is nervous about talking when he's there; she seems to be sick more often and misses work; she makes excuses at the last minute about why she can't meet you or she tries to avoid you on the street; she seems sad, lonely, withdrawn and is afraid; she uses drugs or alcohol to cope.

Should I get involved?  
At Nova Vita, we understand that it is frightening and often frustrating to know that someone you care about is being abused. Perhaps you feel the problem will work itself out. Not so. The violence won't end until action is taken to stop it.

All intimate relationships have problems, and sometimes it's difficult for others to decide when it's appropriate to intervene. Below are some of the concerns you may have about whether or not you should try to help.

Points of Concern	Points to Consider
You feel it is none of your business	It could be a matter of life or death, violence is everyone's business
You don't know what to say	Saying you care and are concerned is a good start
You might make things worse	Doing nothing could make things worse
It's not serious enough to involve the police	Police are trained to respond and utilize other resources
You are afraid his violence will turn to you or your family	Speak to her alone. Let the police know if you receive threats







Nova Vita is always looking for creative ways to diversify our funding and to raise our profile in the community – this is how the idea of a social enterprise came into being. With a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the generous support of community, Nova Vita was able to open “Closet Couture,” a high end, gently used clothing boutique in Brantford in July 2013.

Closet Couture serves three important functions; it produces a reliable source of revenue by the sale of gently used clothing to help fund Nova Vita’s programs and services, it acts as a job training site for women looking for job opportunities in the retail sector, and finally it raises Nova Vita’s profile in the for-profit sector in Brantford and the County of Brant. We are extremely excited about this venture and we are confident that it will be a great success!

Many, many thanks to all of our donors and supporters who helped us make this dream a reality!



Status of Women Canada

The BRAVE Committee Canada (Brant’s Response Against Violence Everywhere) is a community based domestic violence coordinating committee was created under the leadership of the Crown Attorney’s Office and the Ministry of the Attorney General. For the past 15 years the committee has served the community. Currently, the Ministry of Community and Social Services provides annualized funding for BRAVE. Composed of 22 local agencies serving victims and perpetrators of domestic violence in Brantford and Brant County, the BRAVE Committee is committed to coordinating and improving services to victims of domestic violence.

In 2013, the BRAVE Committee applied for and received a 24 month Status of Women Canada grant for \$180,720, targeting both boys and girls in grades 6 to 10 in at risk schools and young men and women in first or second year studies at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford Campus. Young men and women involved with the Brant Children’s Aid Society, Nova Vita, and St. Leonard’s Community Services will also participate in the project. Nova Vita agreed to act as the lead organization with Diana Boal, as the project coordinator.

The project will consist of a series of media advertisements such as billboards, t-shirts, baseball caps, and video clips on Facebook that will be used to engage participants in creating a community that is engaged and united in helping eliminate domestic violence in our community. As well, young men and boys will act as leaders in all stages of the project.

*"The Harper Government is committed to eliminating violence against women and girls," said Minister Am-brose. "Our government has been working with communities to improve the safety and security of women - funding hundreds of projects across Canada to end violence against women and girls."*

*"I am thrilled to announce on International Women's Day that our Government is backing this ground-breaking project to support Nova Vita and address violence against women and girls in our community," said McCole-man. Nova Vita has been improving our community for years through its work to combat domestic abuse and this funding will help strengthen those efforts significantly."*

*"Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services is committed to doing all it can to help end violence against women and girls" said Joy Freeman, Executive Director of the organization. "We are pleased to partner with Status of Women Canada on this project to improve mechanisms for reducing and preventing violence in our community."*

SOURCE: Status of Women Canada





# Nova Vita Statistics

Average age of women living in the shelter is 35.

82 nights, the shelter was **over occupancy.**

24% of the women were over the age of 45.

Total Shelter Women  
75% from Brantford, 5% from the County and 20% were from other cities.

Over 50% of the children living in the shelter were 0 - 6 years of age.



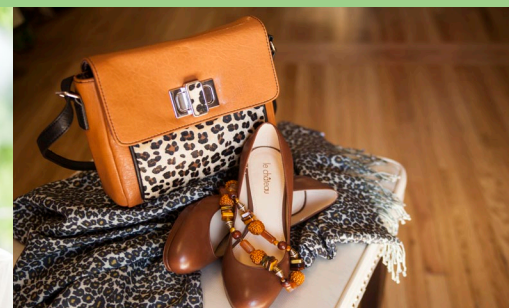
Thank you to the following companies and volunteers who helped renovate and design our beautiful boutique - "Closet Couture" - we could not have done it without you.

Alexanian Carpet and Flooring  
All Canadian Storage  
A & S Draperies  
B.C. Painting & Contracting  
Benson Construction  
Boston Design  
Celadon  
Karen Cochrane  
Deans Electric Ltd.  
Decorating Den Interiors  
Dennis Evans

The Electricians  
Electrical Safety Authority  
Gallery Lumiere  
Groves Electric Inc.  
HeartStrings  
Home Depot  
McKenzie Electric  
Phil Daniels  
Pike & Sons Floors  
Reid & Deleye Contractors Ltd.  
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Toppers Pizza  
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Turkstra Lumber  
Union Gas  
Volunteers from OLG  
Volunteers from RBC  
Volunteers from Ricoh  
Volunteers from SRG

 **Ontario**  
Ontario Trillium Foundation



# STATISTICS

## Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services

### Shelter Services

Women	154
Children	133
<b>Total number of shelter residents</b>	<b>279</b>
Average length of stay	40 days
Total average occupancy	88%

### Community Counselling Services

Women in Transitional Housing & Support	351
Women in Counselling Programs	360
Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Program	
*Mothers	11
*Children	16
Men’s Counselling Programs	
*Challenge to Change/Partner Assault	252
*Partner Contact	344
Caring Families Program	70
Volunteer Hours	2,505

# FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

For the fiscal year April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

### REVENUE

Provincial Government	1,568,395
Municipal Government	230,163
Fundraising and Grants	218,612
Other Sources of Revenue	104,790
Brant United Way	111,906
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,233,866</b>

### EXPENDITURES

Residential Services	1,408,978
*Shelter Program	
*Children’s Program	
*Transitional Program	
Community Counselling	749,437
*Women’s Program	
*Men’s Program	
*Children’s Program	
Community Outreach	88,605
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,247,020</b>