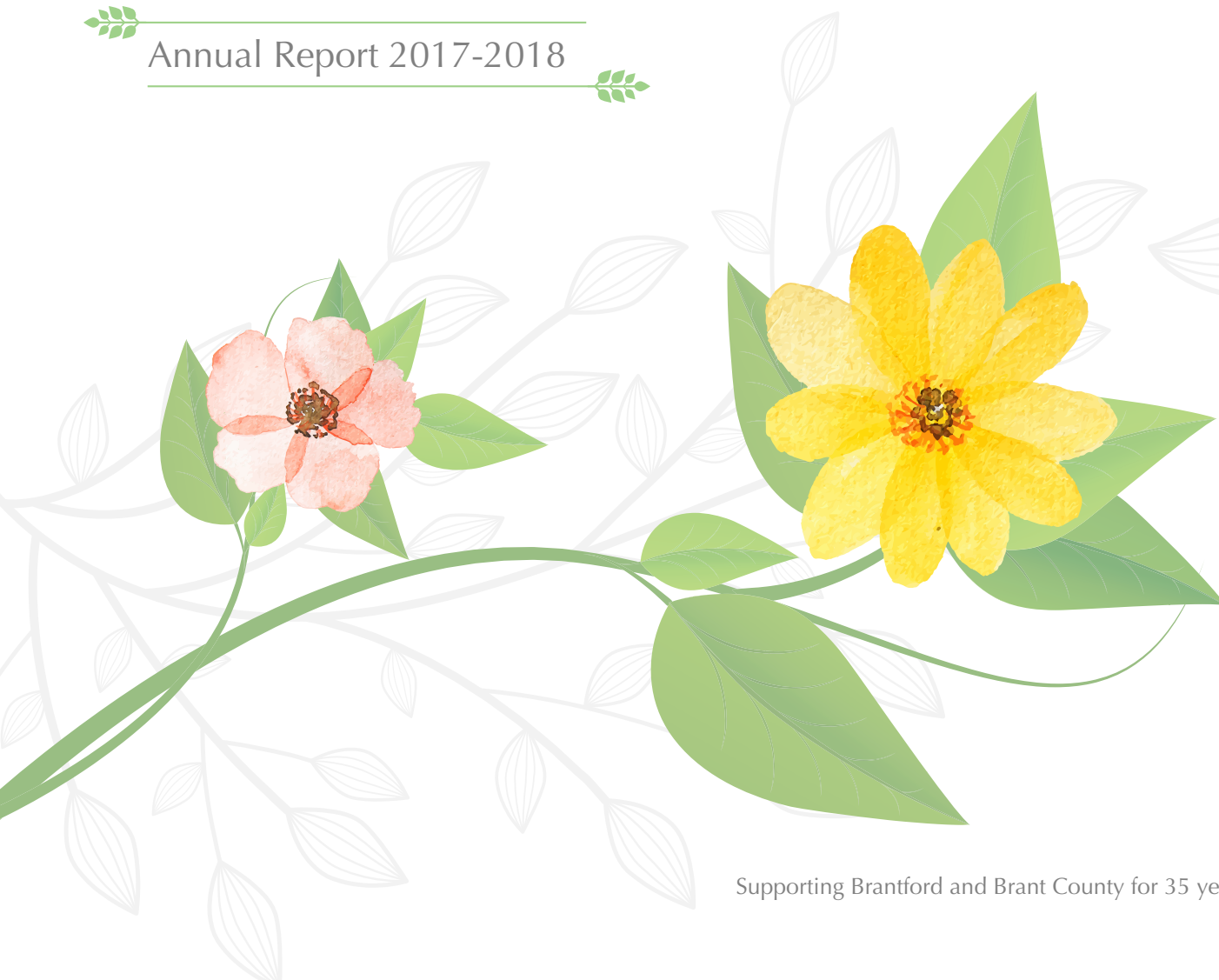


help. hope. heal.



Annual Report 2017-2018



Supporting Brantford and Brant County for 35 years.



novavita
help. hope. heal.

novavita

Our Vision

Every person is entitled to a life without violence.

Our Mission

We provide holistic client-centered residential and counselling services to abused and homeless women and their children and counselling to the perpetrators of domestic violence in Brantford and Brant County.

Our Capacity

Our staff are focused, committed, passionate, innovative, and competent. Because of the support of our funders and donors, we are able to provide the best services and make a difference in our client's lives.

Our Partners

We have a history of building strong relationships which are essential to our success. We will continue to build relationships at the local, provincial and national levels investigating innovation and best practices in family violence services.



Our Journey – Timeline of 35 years

1995

59 North Park Street opened with 18 emergency beds and program space.

1989

Began providing counselling services to male perpetrators.

June 1, 1983

Nova Vita opened its doors with 18 beds.

2013

Opened our first social enterprise, Closet Couture, to develop additional financial support by selling gently used clothing and to educate the community about Nova Vita in a unique way.

2010

New logo reflecting strength, passion and commitment in our pursuit to eradicate domestic violence – to “help, hope and heal”.

1998

First charity Golf Tournament to raise program dollars.

1999

First time ever, Nova Vita could not accommodate every woman and child who came to our door.

2001

Funding from the Ministry allowed us to launch our children’s program.

Development of The Refrigerator Door, a handbook and community resource for women seeking to leave abusive relationships.

2003

Expanded current facility and added 10 beds for homeless and abused women and children.

2004

Name change to Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services to reflect that we had become more than a shelter.


2005

Opening of Maria’s House, offering longer term residential stays combining independent living with counselling and support services.

2007

Opened additional transitional housing and support programs with eight apartment units.

Developed more diverse programming for women who have experienced domestic abuse with strong emphasis on prevention, early intervention and services for perpetrators of domestic violence.



*“Thank you for being such a life changer for me.
You allowed my daughter and I to remove ourselves
from an abusive environment. You made me a stronger
woman. I feel very blessed.”*

– Client



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD:

This year has been one of revitalization as we welcomed our new Executive Director and explored new and creative ways of providing services and support to those in need. Our outreach programs are a vital part of that as we continue to support families and those who encircle them. We continue to strive to support the ‘family’ as an entity to ensure they all live in a safe and welcoming environment.

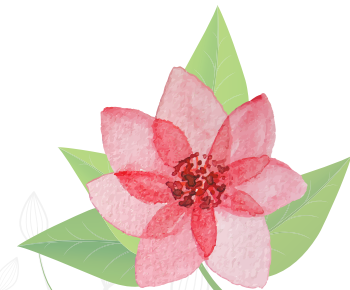
This year we said goodbye to two of our Board members, Dr. Louise Scott and Heather Barker, both of whom were very instrumental in helping with the search and selection of our new Executive Director.

We are very happy to welcome Susan Swackhammer as the newest member of the board. Susan brings a wealth of experience and expertise to our group from both a local and provincial perspective.

The year has been one of financial restraint as local and provincial funding cutbacks leaves us striving to maintain adequate levels of staffing supports. We will continue to provide quality services as we continue to work through these ongoing challenges.

Many, many thanks to our remarkable staff, volunteers, donors and everyday supporters as you continue to endure with us as we work through some complex and sometimes bewildering circumstances.

Gerri Jensen, Board President





“My confidence is back and the ability to move forward in my life without fear.”

– Client



Executive Director's Report

Thirty-five years ago, a group of dedicated and passionate volunteers came together with a shared vision of creating a safe home where women could escape violent relationships, rebuild their lives, and begin to heal. The seed of an idea - a new life, Nova Vita - was sown.

Over the years Nova Vita has sheltered thousands of women and children. We have been a shoulder to cry on and a kind voice in the middle of the night. Our programs and services have expanded to include community outreach, public education, transitional support, second-stage housing, therapeutic counselling, children's counselling, services for men, legal advocacy, volunteer opportunities, and much more.

This past year, we also celebrated significant achievements. Lynda Taylor, Director of Operations, and Debbie Merriam, Transitional Housing Support Worker, were both recognized for 30 years of dedicated service at Nova Vita. Furthermore, Raghida Mazzawi,

Community Counselling Manager was awarded the Elizabeth Manson Award for Community Service from Sick Kids Hospital for her leadership in children's mental health.

Thirty-five years ago, the seed for a women's emergency shelter was planted. Over the years, our deep roots spread wide and grew into a vital resource for all family members struggling with domestic violence. Today, we continue to branch out with diverse and innovative community-based programs in our pursuit of violence-free lives for everyone.

As the Executive Director of Nova Vita, I am honoured and humbled to build upon the hard work of my predecessors with the support of incredible volunteers, staff, management, Board of Directors, and community partners as we grow this garden of hope together.

Natasha Dobler, Executive Director



285
Walk-In
Clients



5,074
Crisis and
Support Calls



112
Women Lived
at Nova Vita



55 Days
Average Length of Stay
due to Family Violence



Emergency Shelter

“Nova Vita provided me with the opportunity to heal, rest, learn and transform my life from dark to positive, healthy, safe and successful.” - Client

At Nova Vita’s shelter, we strive to provide so much more than a safe place to sleep. We help our guests **heal** by encouraging mindfulness and relaxation, by teaching the value of self-care, and empowering and encouraging bravery. We help them:

To rest by providing healthy, hot meals everyday, prepared by our remarkable cook, and caring for children so that mother’s can sleep and nurture themselves.

To learn by offering education about domestic violence and homelessness, along with skill building groups that strive to offer new abilities these women can carry with them.

To be positive by having fun, celebrating birthdays, new babies, holidays and laughing together.

To be safe by discussing physical, environmental, emotional and spiritual safety along with focusing on and celebrating each and every small success.

We are so honoured to be a part of these families’ journeys and we feel blessed to walk beside these women who teach us so much about strength, courage and resiliency. In the shelter, we pride ourselves on the notion that Nova Vita is so much more than just a bed.

Katie Maas, Residential Manager

Domestic Violence Prevention Services

At Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services, we understand that domestic violence affects all family members and can have ripple effects across generations. That's why we strive to develop programs and services that compliment and support the essential work that our shelter and residential services provide to the women and children.

Families

"If you love your kids, you will always be open to better yourself for your kids. There is no shame in admitting when you are wrong and can do things better." - Client

Our family-centred programs, such as **Caring Families** and the **Differential Response**, aim to provide assessment, safety planning, therapy and education services for all family members to interrupt the cycle of conflict and violence. Parents learn how to be respectful in their parenting relationships and consider their children's emotional and psychological needs when managing relationship conflict. The children process their experiences of conflict and violence between their parents in a safe and supportive group setting.

Children

"Coming to counselling helps me feel better, but I wish mom and dad would stop fighting." - Client

To help children overcome and heal from the effects of family violence, we provide them with opportunities for playing, socializing, learning and processing their experiences in group and individual settings. Our **Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Program** offers mothers and their children support and counselling around their experiences of violence while they begin the healing process. Our **STEP programs** provide opportunities for healing through play and learning that meet the developmental needs of preschoolers residing in our shelter.

Raghida Mazzawi, Community Counselling Manager



3

Babies Born
at Nova Vita



140

Children Received
Counselling



91

Children Lived
at Nova Vita





412

Men Accessing
Nova Vita's Programs



Challenge to Change Program

"I will say it again, I was hesitant at the start, but I wish this program was offered to more men before the incident that got them here happens." - Client

When an individual is open to learning, there is hope for change. Our Challenge to Change program invites individuals who are looking to develop and maintain abuse-free intimate relationships, to identify personal areas of growth that will help achieve their goal. The Partner Assault Response Program invites individuals who have been charged and convicted of a domestic violence assault to take accountability for their actions and step outside of their comfort zone to learn new ways of being in that relationship, that is free of violence and power imbalances.

"Give us a chance to learn this stuff before we get arrested." - Client

Prevention is key to breaking the cycle of violence. With the generosity of Brant United Way, we have been able to expand our services to reach more clients. Our SCRIBE Program is offered to men who self identify as being, or are at risk of, being abusive in their intimate partner relationships. Group participants examine personal attitudes, beliefs, and values while exploring new ways to be healthy and respectful in their relationships. In addition, Individual Counselling is provided to clients who face barriers that prevent them from attending groups. We also deliver crisis intervention and wellbeing planning to individuals experiencing situations that increase their risk of reoffending.

Raghida Mazzawi, Community Counselling Manager



The April Featherstonhaugh Estate

Nova Vita graciously acknowledges a substantial bequest from the April Featherstonhaugh Estate. We were facing a significant deficit that threatened our core programs and services. However, due to the foresight and generosity of April we were able to save our essential programs. To find out more about planned giving, please contact Fiona McFarlane, Donor Relations and Communications Manager.

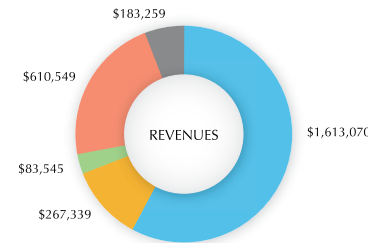


The Commemoration of Aprils Retreat, a sitting area in our shelter dedicated in memory of devoted board member and gracious donor who had a special place in her heart for Nova Vita.

Ontario Trillium Foundation

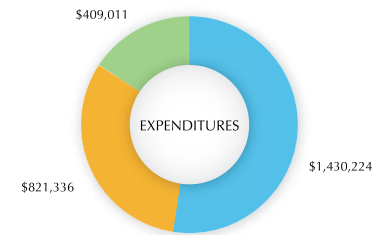
Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services was successful in receiving a 3 year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to foster community engagement and build the capacity of parents, caregivers, and professionals of children exposed to high-conflict and/or domestic violence through a trauma-informed framework.

Financial Accountability



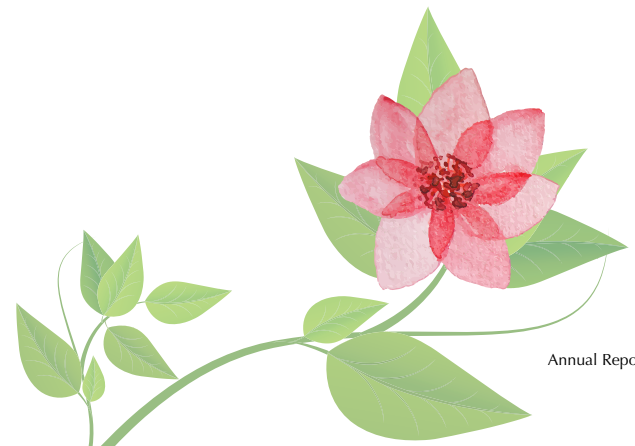
Total Revenue
\$2,757,762


- Provincial
- Municipal
- Brant United Way
- Grants/Foundations/Donations
- Other Sources of Revenue



Total Expenditures
\$2,660,572

- Residential Services
- Community Counselling
- Community Engagement





*“Nova Vita saved my life.
I will forever be grateful for what
they have done for me.”*

– Client



Women's Services

Community Counselling

Our Community Counselling Services has individual and group counselling for women who have been impacted by domestic violence. Some are currently experiencing abuse within their families and others are impacted by past abuse. Services are individualized for each woman to meet her specific needs such as recovery from abuse, seniors programming, second stage counselling, anxiety and mindfulness techniques, specific therapeutic interventions, and art therapy.

Transitional and Housing Support

When women leave or consider leaving an abusive or high conflict relationship there are many difficulties they face. They may need to re-establish a home and their finances, manage health issues, deal with custody and access issues, find supports for their children,

reconnect with their family and friends, navigate immigration and citizenship difficulties, legal or medical difficulties due to an assault, and more. The list can be very long and seem endless.

Our Transitional Support Workers are the lifeline for women in this situation. They are the strength, support, advocacy and tenacity for a woman when she has so much facing her that she can't even imagine how she will find the energy to get things done or even know where to start. The Transitional Support Worker provides kind, caring, professional, and knowledgeable support in the community for women and their families. They are skilled in navigating the legal, housing, and financial difficulties, offering hope to women so they are not alone.

Gail Quinlan, Director of Client Services

Our Volunteers

Thank you to our committed volunteers.



 **3,527** Total number of
Volunteer Hours

"There can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to help others without expecting anything in return."

– Nelson Mandela

Community Engagement

Heels to Heal Walk

Featuring the community standing tall against domestic violence.
Thank you participants and sponsors.



Charity Golf Tournament

Thank you dedicated golfers and sponsors for supporting our tournament year after year for 20 years.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Thank you to our corporate sponsors for their continued support of our events.

Skate to Heal

Our 2nd Annual skate-a-thon at Brant Sports Complex where our goal was having kids helping kids. It allowed children to set goals, a lap for every dollar raised, have fun and help raise money for the children at Nova Vita, in addition to gaining a true sense of helping others.

International Women's Day

March 8th is a global movement. International Women's Day is a day for everyone to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. It was an evening to inspire women towards personal and professional growth while showcasing and celebrating businesses in our community who want to #PressforProgress.

We are so grateful to all our donors who without your continued support it would not be possible to provide the essential programming that helps families achieve stability, independence and a better future.



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