



surrey  
women's  
centre



Annual Report 2019/2020

EVERY GIRL HAS THE RIGHT TO A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE.

*Let us make this a reality.*



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear friends,

My first year as President of the Surrey Women's Centre has been both challenging and vastly rewarding. This year the world faced a global crisis that changed life as we knew it. We were required to stay distant, but somehow came closer together as we saw our similarities over our differences.

The Surrey Women's Centre was faced with unpredictable challenges that required us to strike a delicate balance between the safety of our staff and those we serve, and keeping our doors safely open for women and children that required our support and services. We worked together to navigate these uncharted waters, prioritizing health and safety.

At this time, it's been more important than ever to have strong, compassionate, and unwavering leadership, and we are grateful to have that in our Executive Director, Shahnaz Rahman. Shahnaz's dedication to the Surrey Women's Centre has been instrumental. Indeed the past year has been unpredictable but thanks to your support, the Surrey Women's Centre was able to carry on operations and reached out to over six thousand women through Smart Van services.

The Covid era has had a major impact on fundraising efforts, thus your support matters more than ever right now. We appreciate your efforts thus far and ask that you continue to support the Surrey Women's Centre so we may continue to serve and support the women and children that need us.

Thank you,  
**Navneet Mann, BBA, LLB**

## Gender Inclusion Audit

The Surrey Women's Centre is excited to announce the completion of its first *Gender Inclusion Audit*. We first wish to acknowledge this would not have been possible without the support of the Vancouver Foundation and the Pilot Fund for Gender Equality.

As a centre committed to supporting all survivors of gender-based violence, we also recognize that as a women's centre we might not feel like a safe space for trans, two spirit, and

gender diverse people who have experienced violence, and we want to change that.



We began this project with meaningful partnerships with community members who specialize in inclusion work. Through these partnerships, this audit was able to examine all aspects of how we support clients in our community with a lens of gender inclusion in

order to understand what we were doing right, as well as where we had room for improvement.

This involved several focus groups with staff, volunteers, and board members, along with surveys distributed within the centre as well as to the broader community. This was in order to understand what our community needed from us as an inclusive organization. This project has now laid the groundwork for us to move forward in supporting all survivors of gender-based violence as the only community-based victim services program in the growing Surrey community.

Special thanks to those who conducted our audit:  
**Daley Laing** (they/them): FireSeed Facilitation  
**Cameron Duder** (he/him): Cameron Duder Editing, Indexing & Evaluation  
**Felix Gilliliand** (they/them): WAVAW  
**Kailey Handerson**: Project Coordinator

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

Surrey Women's Centre continues to actively break down barriers in increasing safety and access for those who need our support. In our *2019/2020 Annual Report* you will see snapshots of Surrey Women's Centre's program activities. This past year, our services were accessed by over thirteen thousand individuals including women, girls, and youth. Approximately six thousand vulnerable individuals were served on Surrey streets via the SMART Van. A majority of women and youth on the streets have experienced significant trauma and violence at some point in their lives. The stories are heart breaking, but the work must continue.

These are challenging, unprecedented, and uncertain times. COVID-19 has added additional barriers for those who live with violence in their homes. The declaration of



the pandemic in early March led to safety measures which resulted in increased isolation which meant confinement with their violent partners. We saw that already vulnerable population at an increased risk of sexual assault and violence. Our Centre continues to provide essential services with risk assessments and thorough safety planning. These services have been provided in person, whenever possible, as well as remotely by telephone and video services.

Our dedicated staff are regularly exposed to trauma through shared stories and experiences which is not easy work. I honor their courage and conviction for leaving behind all that is familiar and comfortable, to serve those who need our support.

I value each and every member of our wonderful Board of Directors. The Centre benefits immensely from their governance expertise, guidance, and generosity. Thank you Navneet, Roni-Jane, Carly, Simroop, Jaspreet, Pavan, and Rupi for being all that you are and for all that you do for the Centre.

Your generosity as a community of loyal donors, funders, community partners, volunteers, and supporters is crucial in sustaining our life-changing services for many marginalized groups, vulnerable women, and their families. By supporting our programs and services, your generosity gives women and children the confidence to leave a life of violence. Your support can change a life and even a generation!

Thank you for all that you do to support our work.

**Shahnaz Rahman**, *Executive Director*



# *A Survivor's Journey from despair to dignity*

Young and beautiful, Zoya immigrated to Canada with optimistic dreams of a better life. Working in a position within her community, Zoya caught the attention of a powerful and influential man, and after his pursuit, he proposed.

A short two months after their wedding, Zoya was stunned by a distinct change in her new husband's demeanor. He began to control what she wore and accused her of dressing to attract other men.

His jealousy escalated and his sexual advances became forceful. Soon, sex turned to rape. Twice she attempted to escape, but through family connections, was pressured to return both times. The physical assaults quickly resumed and alongside came psychological abuse. The culmination of his tyranny occurred one weekend over a 48-hour period. It turned to brutal, tortuous rape.

As the hours crept past, and the repeated assaults became more violent, Zoya had the sickening realization that he had the potential to become murderous. Given a moment alone when he stepped out for a meeting, she called a friend, who lived thousands of miles away to confess that her life was in danger. The friend took immediate action; she booked a flight out that night, arranged for the taxi, and offered Zoya refuge for the next three weeks.

Filing charges with the RCMP in 2016 when she returned, they connected her with the Surrey Women's Centre for legal and emotional support. The Crown counsel was supportive and strong in their belief of her testimony, however, the defense made it their mission to tarnish her reputation and methodically discredit her testament.

In South Asian culture, discussions of sex are taboo. On the stand, Zoya was forced into retelling the most excruciating intimate details of the sexual assault and torture she suffered, in front of an all-male courtroom.

Through it all, Gina and Imran, Surrey Women's Centre's Court Support Workers, stayed until the end of each day of the trial with Zoya and were her rock during the courtroom interrogations.

For 6 straight weeks, Zoya was subjected to relentless cross-examination. The perpetrator was cross-examined for two days. Four years of court ordeal and unimaginable strength, the perpetrator was finally found guilty sentenced to three years in prison. Since it's rare in marital rape to end in conviction, this was an enormous triumph.

In one of her last brutal cross examination, Zoya said *"The experience of the past few weeks of this brutal cross examination and humiliation has now far exceed several folds of what I suffered in the rapes."*

*"You can be free of abuse.  
Always have faith in yourself."*

When asked how she could maintain her tenacious strength and courage through such intense pressure and bullying, Zoya said the remarkable support she received from the Surrey Women's Centre's team carried her through the storm. In her own words. *"I could not have survived this without the consistent support of the caring and skilled staff at the Centre"*.

But Zoya has an incredible core of fierce fortitude. Her message to other women in this kind of horrific situation is *"you can be free of abuse. Always have faith in yourself. But mostly, speak your truth. I deeply hope my journey will help other women speak up against any abuse."*

When Zoya's cross examination was finally completed, she kept thanking us for the support. She never once patted her own back and when we repeatedly reminded her that *"No-Zoya, you did this... it was all you"*.

Victim Support Worker — Surrey Women's Centre

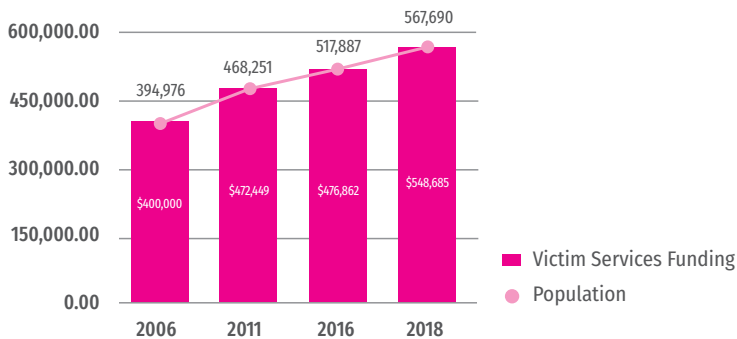


## CASE FOR SUPPORT

# An investment in Women & Girls

Looking at a decade of change (12 years to align with Census years), Vancouver is the largest city in B.C. Surrey is expected to surpass the population of Vancouver by 2030. Surrey is the fastest growing city in British Columbia and one of the fastest growing cities in Canada.

### FASTEST GROWING CITY IN BC



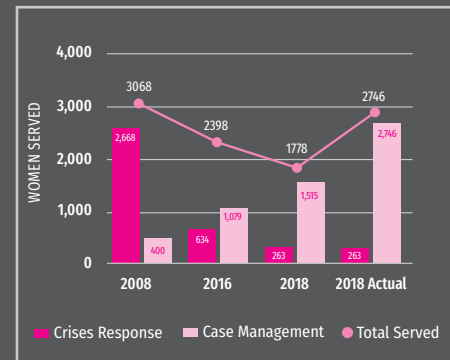
Vancouver's population grew 9% over from 2008-2018 while Surrey added 123,000 new residents at 31% growth

## WOMEN SERVED AT SWC

April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020

SMART Van	6119
Counselling Clients	1,230
Community Based Victim Services	2,336
Domestic Violence Unit (Highest Risk Files)	96
Resource Centre	951
Drop-In Clients	2,490
Crisis Callers	721
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,943</b>

## THE CHANGING NATURE OF VICTIM SERVICES



2008 risk assessment model introduced at SWC

#standwithher

# Inspirational GIVING



**To Lisa Da Silva, birthdays are more than an anniversary celebration of birth. In fact her birthday this past year took on a new meaning when she decided to turn her special day into a fundraiser for Surrey Women's Centre.**

A few years back, while volunteering at the Justice Centre at Simon Fraser University, Lisa saw firsthand the devastating impact of sexual assault and gender-based violence in our community.

When asked about her motivation for giving, Lisa said "Women from all walks of life, are suffering right here in our own backyard, and that should not be the norm. I am just so happy that I was able to gather my friends together and raise this money for Surrey Women's Centre, because I know of the great work that the Centre does."

Lisa chose Surrey Women's Centre as her charity of choice and organized a fundraising event to celebrate her birthday on February 20th, 2020. The celebration was hosted at a local restaurant in South Surrey. The event was attended by her 20 friends who raised over \$1,100 dollars and also secured new supporters for the Centre.

Shahnaz Rahman, Executive Director of Surrey Women's Centre was honored to be invited to the event. Lisa's friends went above and beyond to create a décor that had a theme of "Stand with Her". Shahnaz provided a short presentation about the work of the Centre and was moved and inspired by Lisa and her friend's generosity of spirit.

"Attending Lisa's special birthday celebration was an honor. The fact that Lisa picked Surrey Women's Centre as a beneficiary of her special occasion was truly heart-warming. This gesture of giving demonstrated the value of community partnerships and solidarity in supporting the victims of gender-based violence. A huge shout out to Lisa and all her friends! Thank you! Your support made a huge difference!" — Shahnaz Rahman, Executive Director of Surrey Women's Centre.



# SURREY WOMEN'S CENTRE SOCIETY STAFF LIST AND POSITIONS

## ADMINISTRATION TEAM

**Executive Director**  
Shahnaz Rahman

**Executive Assistant**  
Eileen Reyna Domingo

**Donor and Communications Coordinator**  
Anoop Pala

**Resource Centre Assistant**  
Megan Rust

**Data Administrative Assistant**  
Seshley Kumar

## CRISIS VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES TEAM

**Crisis Victim Support Worker and Coordinator**  
Kailey

**Crisis Victim Support Worker**  
Sundeep, Madison, Imran

## COURT VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES TEAM

**Court Victim Support Worker and Co-Coordinator**  
Katelyn, Gina

**Court Victim Support Worker**  
Aastha, Brittney, Sidra, Ronnie

## MINISTRY OF CHILD & FAMILY DEVELOPMENT TEAM

**Ministry of Child and Family Development Victim Support Worker and Coordinator**  
Sarabjit

**Ministry of Child & Family Development Victim Support Worker**  
Preeti, Ambreen

## SURREY INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE UNIT

**Intimate Partner Violence Unit Victim Support Worker and Co-Coordinator**  
Lorraine, Neeru

## SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT & SURREY MOBILE ASSAULT RESPONSE TEAM (SMART)

**Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team (SMART) Coordinator**  
Lynn

**Special Victims Unit Support Worker and Coordinator**  
Rakheen

**SMART Support Worker and Special Victims Unit Support Worker**  
Claire, Stephanie

**SMART Support Worker**  
Tayler, Nisha, Harsimran

## COUNSELLING SERVICES TEAM - STOPPING THE VIOLENCE (STV) PROGRAM

**Stopping the Violence Counsellor and Coordinator**  
Melody Mirza-Agha

**Stopping the Violence Counsellor**  
Shivani Agarwal, Ammen Dhillon

**Counselling Intake Worker**  
Sharani Leopaul

## DIGNITY COUNSELLING SERVICES (DCS) PROGRAM

**Dignity Counselling Counsellor and Co-Coordinator**  
Sinead Neary, Coneitia McKim

**Counsellor**  
Tiffany Brown, Carol Hodge, Lorena Borsato



# The SMART Van

## NOT JUST A VAN, A LIFELINE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS ON THE STREET

In 2017, through our unrestricted funding donations, we were able to purchase the SMART Van to meet the critical need of after-hours support for vulnerable women and youth on the street. The mobile crisis unit provides safe transportation to the hospital and helps increase women's safety on the street. Our existing partnerships with Fraser Health, Forensic Nursing Services at Surrey Memorial Hospital, and Surrey RCMP further supports our capacity to take on this project.

Last year the SMART Van was out 145 nights of the year, serving some 5163 people. The presence of the van provides many vulnerable women and girls with a safe space that is supportive and engaging. This service has never been more needed than it is during these times of COVID-19.

The Van provides a safe warm space for women to receive emotional support and to access essential supplies including food, hygiene kits, and harm-reduction gear from Fraser Health. We also provide women with life-saving resources for shelters and transition homes, information for other community supports, and can provide free transportation to the hospital.

The SMART Van also works closely with sex workers to increase safety and reduce crime on the streets. Once reported, bad dates are documented and shared with a community partner who distributes information in a weekly newsletter known as the "Red Light Alert". By being informed of dangerous and violent interactions, sex workers are able to look out for themselves and one another. If consent is given, we also provide the reported information to police in hopes of apprehending the perpetrator.



The SMART Van's tireless efforts and presence on the street has been effective in defusing criminal activity and increasing safety as staff continue to facilitate connections to build trust and report crime to police. The Van has continued to service more individuals each year and the needs are evidently increasing in these times. We have a shared vision for growth and expansion as we work with our partners to further meet the needs of those most marginalized."

You are my angels at night"- A survivor of violence who accessed SMART Van support.

— Lynn Miot, SMART Team Coordinator



# THE *Shadow* PANDEMIC

At the outset of the Coronavirus pandemic that brought thriving countries and economies to a stand-still, our communities are also increasingly threatened by a growing pandemic.

A pandemic that lurks in the shadows and one whose toll and impact is overshadowed by COVID-19.

The pandemic we are speaking of is  
**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

• • • • •

The measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, resulted in increased isolation and confinement of women with their violent partners. It exposed an already marginalized segment of our population to the increase threat of violence and sexual assault.

In fact Surrey Women's Centre has seen a huge surge in severity of gender-based violence since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic.

**#standwithher**

# THE FACTS

1 in 2 women will experience sexual assault at least once after the age of 15

Sexual assault is the only violent crime in Canada that is not declining

Gender inequality is the root cause and driver of sexual assault and gender-based violence

Sexual assault leaves survivors with a lifetime of scars and impacts every aspect of their lives

On any given night, thousands of women and their children sleep in shelters because it is not safe to be at home

Indigenous women are killed at 6 times the rate of non-indigenous women

In Canada, 1 woman is killed every 6 days by her intimate partner  
**YOU CAN HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE**



# FINANCIALS 2019/2020

## REVENUE

Government Grants and Contracts	\$1,385,000
Donations	376,000
Fee for Service	139,000
Capital and Other Grants	62,000
Other	9,000

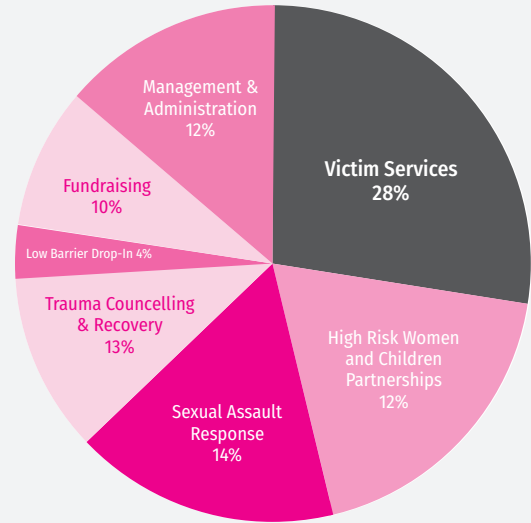
**Total Revenue** **\$1,971,000**

## EXPENSES

Wages and Salaries	1,186,000
Management and Administration	242,000
Fundraising	214,000
Program and Operating	432,000

**Total Expenses** **\$2,074,000**

**- \$102,000 Defecit**



**How Funding was Distributed**

*Dignity Counselling Services is Surrey Women's Centre fee-for-service social enterprise. Last year, our team of registered clinical counsellors offered 1741 sessions of low cost professional trauma counselling. Two times more than the previous year and reinvested \$40,000 in SWC's range of free and confidential services.*

# FINANCIALS 2019/2020

## ASSETS

Cash and Receivables	\$231,000
Term Deposits	210,000
Prepaid Expenses	23,000
Capital Assets	94,000

**Total Assets** **\$558,000**

## LIABILITIES

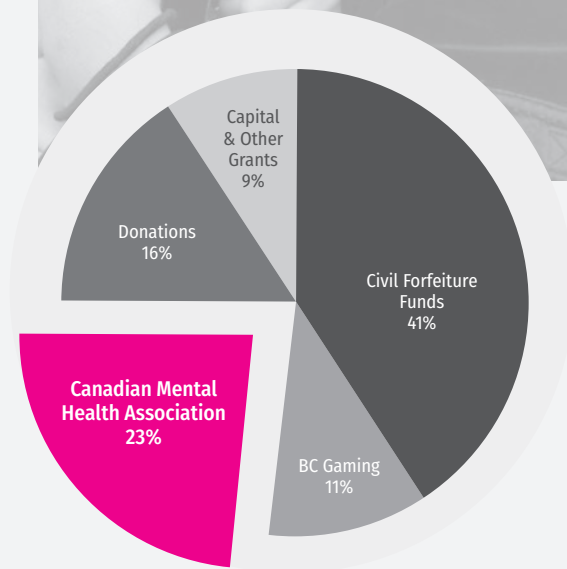
Bank Debt	112,000
Accounts Payable	60,000
Wages and Remittances	49,000
Deferred Contributions	284,000

**Total Liabilities** **\$506,000**

**\$52,000 Net Assets**

When vulnerabilities overlap, women and girls are at disproportionately more risk. This reality is especially true for the folks who rely upon the services of the after-hours SMART van.

Nearly twenty-five percent of SMART funding comes from grants thanks to **The Canadian Mental Health Association**. CMHA helped keep the SMART van on the road, recognizing its critical role in responding to the local impacts of the opiate crisis.





## A MESSAGE FROM CARLY CRAWFORD

# Fighting for equity and equality with compassion

**At only five years of age, Carly Crawford sat in front of the television and watched Saddam Hussein rage. Incensed by his actions, she wrote a letter, which her mother posted to an unknown destination.**

Raised in a rural community in Ontario, Carly lived a life disconnected from global events and devoid of multicultural exposure. Yet that news piece triggered in her a deep yearning to learn more about the laws that govern equality for all.

Attitudes towards non-white males in her community were contaminated with bias and women were discouraged to pursue a career. Female empowerment was all but nonexistent, further fueling her desire to seek an understanding of other cultures, religions, and minority and women's issues.

With an innate thirst for justice, Carly left Canada to pursue a law degree in Australia. Intensely involved in the community, Carly's mother and father instilled in her a belief that the ultimate goal of a life well lived was to give back. With that foundation, Carly graduated as a human rights lawyer and returned to Canada in 2010 with her now husband, setting roots in B.C. only blocks from the Surrey Women's Centre.

Even before securing a job, Carly joined the board at SWC. Immersed in a whole new world, her wish to broaden her knowledge of culture and religion unfolded. Under the brilliant tutelage of Sonya Boyce, past Executive Director, Carly learned much about how things work at the Centre, and the difficult and complex issues and crises the staff face each day. Carly's role at SWC went from Secretary, to Co-President, to President in 2017.

The biggest challenge facing SWC is inconsistent funding for critically essential programs that benefit the community at large. In light of this concern, Crawford is awed by the amazing culture Executive Director Shahnaz Rahman has created within the SWC family, and by her ability to implement effective systems on a sometimes-shoestring budget, including ways to support the mental health and well-being of staff.

Reading Andrew Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth* when only a girl, Carly was introduced to the concept of "appreciative wealth." Instead of holding prosperity tightly within the confines of family, Carnegie espoused using one's advantage to be of service and use it towards the good of society.

This philosophy, along with fighting for equity and equality with compassion, has become the mantra and motto Carly Crawford tirelessly lives by as she works her way into the future with SWC as Past President with the board.

# WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER

Thank you to the generous support of:

- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Department of Justice Canada
- Service Canada
- BC Gaming
- Civil Forfeiture
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Vancouver Foundation
- Crime Victim Assistance
- First Nations Health Authority
- WorkBC

... and the more than \$375,000 raised from our private supporters!



*"Before I called Surrey Women's Centre, I was scared and confused, and I had no idea what I was going to do. Now I have a safety plan and I know where I can start from." – Survivor*

We call on our **supporters**, to help us change the lives of all those who experience gender based discrimination and violence.



EVERY GIRL HAS THE RIGHT TO A LIFE FREE OF VIOLENCE.  
LET US MAKE THIS A REALITY.

*Thank you for helping us!*

To make a donation call us at 604-589-1868

[surreywomenscentre.ca](http://surreywomenscentre.ca)