

Free, we are free. It's ok, we are safe now. He can't hurt us anymore. We can have a fresh start now. No more pain for either of us. Rebuilding my life has never sounded better. We are safe now and free to live. Independence is mine once again. I'm so relieved and much happier now. I can actually look in the mirror without flinching. I hope I never have to go through this again. He is in jail now and can't hurt us ever again. I can't believe I didn't do this much sooner. What was I thinking all these years. Safe...it's nice to be safe and secure. Now we can start fresh, it will be so much better now. No more fear. Only confidence and healing. Healing...that is what we need to do now. Thank you Gillian's Place for helping us. We could not have done it without you. We can get a fresh start now I'm looking forward to running my own life I'm not alone. I have many friends. The support here is phenomenal.

2009 annual report



GILLIAN'S PLACE
empowering abused women of niagara

the pursuit of excellence



SUSANNE DILALLA
president



ANNE ARMSTRONG
executive director

“We are thankful to a community who not only supports us financially but also supports us in ending violence against women.”

This has been quite a building year for Gillian’s Place! With our new facility completed and operating, we have turned our attention to the infrastructure of the organization and to pursuing excellence in everything we do. We have evolved from the 7-bed shelter on Salina Street in 1977 to our current 35-bed shelter here on Gibson Place. The organization has substantially increased in size – tripling the square footage from Centre Street and doubling the budget – in just two years. And with this growth comes increased accountability – to the women and children who we strive to keep safe, to the community who supports us, and to the Ministry who funds us.

Building on the governance work done by the board, the organization has dedicated both time and resources to upgrading our infrastructure including policies and procedures. We have increased staffing to better meet the needs of the women and children we serve. As soon as this location was open, we experienced full capacity and we continue to be busy. You may have noticed our new fence to increase safety. And our new sign to increase public awareness. We were pleased this year to continue with re-branding the organization with the new name of Gillian’s Place and our new logo. Our website and brochures have all been re-worked to take on our new

look and have much more information for abused women and for family and friends who want to help them.

Many new opportunities have presented themselves this year. Partnerships in service are a great way to expand our reach. Family and Children’s Services Niagara (FACS) approached us to provide a Domestic Violence Advocate to work in the FACS office and speak with abused women who enter the system through FACS. This pilot project began in February and we are seeing dramatic results in helping more women and joint training both formal and informal which will help both agencies work collaboratively and effectively. More agencies are looking to us to provide in-service training to their staff on recognizing and responding to domestic violence and an overview of our services. We are



pleased to now have the space to offer our boardroom for this training. And partnerships continue with involvement in the Coalition to End Violence Against Women (CEVAW). CEVAW has launched a research project this year “A Domestic Violence Report Card, How Well Does Our Community Respond”. The final report will be available in the fall 2009. Great partnership continues with community volunteers in “Stop Family Violence – It’s Everybody’s

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Business”. The community task force is dedicated to educating employers about domestic violence and how it can follow into the workplace.

All of this could not be accomplished without support from all of our stakeholders – dedicated staff and volunteers, committed community partners, and our community. Certainly the economic downturn has had an impact on everyone and we are constantly amazed at the continued generosity especially in difficult times. When filling out a provincial survey on shelters, we were surprised to calculate the value of our food donations - 60% of our grocery bill, which is equivalent to approximately \$20,000 – is derived from donations. Women in the shelter receive personal care packs and 100% of these items are donated. Gifts for children’s birthdays, special services such as hair dressing, gift cards to allow women to provide those back to school necessities,

transportation from the Moving Forward fund or help in stepping out into their new life with support from the Stepping Stones fund. Donations help to support our Legal Services - legal information and advice by a *lawyer*. To our knowledge, we are the only shelter in Ontario offering this service without charge. None of these “extras” would be provided without your donations.

We are thankful to a community who not only supports us financially but also supports us in ending violence against women. As we look forward to another year, we plan strategically to grow in service, educate for the future, and break the cycle.



Susanne DiLalla



Anne Armstrong

“My children and I felt safe which was the first step in our recovery from years of abuse. I am able to live without fear for my safety and the safety of my children because I choose not to accept the abuse anymore.”

One in four Canadian women has experienced violence at the hands of a partner

In 2008, the Niagara Regional Police received 6532 domestic violence calls, a 36% increase from 2007

Only 36% of abused women contact the police

Abused women who do turn to the police are beaten an average of 33 times by the perpetrator before seeking police involvement

In Ontario alone, an average of 25 women are murdered by an intimate partner every year

It costs approximately \$71 million **annually** in the Niagara community for domestic violence including medical, legal and lost productivity costs



“I’ve really grown from this experience. I am raising my two young children, going to university full time, and seeing a bright hope for the future ahead.” — Anonymous

SUPPORTING WOMEN *to rebuild their lives*

Gillian’s Place has been a safe haven for more than thirty years and continues to provide a range of specialized services to help rebuild the lives of abused women and children in St. Catharines and North Niagara.

This was the first full year in our new facility and what a productive and exciting year it has been! The new shelter is fully accessible for the disabled and now, for the first time, Gillian’s Place is able to provide appropriate services to elderly and disabled women and their children who have experienced abuse. As a result, we were able to provide shelter, safety, support, and transitional assistance to a 77 year old woman who left her abusive husband after 45 years of marriage. Her decision to make such a dramatic move at this time in her life was a diagnosis of cancer. She could not battle both the disease and the continual abuse she endured and survive. Gillian’s Place was able to provide her with her own room complete with an en-suite bathroom to allow her dignity and privacy to deal with the side effects of chemotherapy. Today, she is living on her own free from violence and with her cancer in remission.

Gillian’s Place was also able to provide safety and shelter to a woman with a 9 year old boy who was severely disabled. The new facility gave this child access to all areas of the shelter allowing him the freedom to

join with other children in the playroom. This family lived at Gillian’s Place for six months until they were able to secure appropriate accessible accommodations. As a result of our continued devotion to providing the best service to disabled people, a representative of Gillian’s Place has been trained in the area of accessible services by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and will be responsible for training all domestic violence services providers in the Niagara Region to ensure that all individuals in the community can access services appropriately.

These are only two of the many experiences we encountered this year. 267 abused women and their children have lived behind the secure controlled access of our shelter and 1,723 women in crisis called the support line and spoke to our counsellors for crisis support and safety planning. Gillian’s Place assists thousands of women who are working towards a violence free life who live both in the shelter and our community.

Our Outreach program includes our Manager of Legal Services who is a family law lawyer and our Transitional Housing and Support Worker. The shelter counselling team is also available to meet with women 24 hours a day. And the number accessing our outreach services continues to grow. As a result of

this increasing demand we have added additional counsellors to assist clients both in the shelter and in the community. We have also brought in additional relief staff and are fortunate to have language capabilities in French, Spanish and Polish.

Our Manager of Legal Services assisted 518 women this year. She provides family law advice including issues of child custody and access, family support and division of property. Many women in abusive relationships are told by their partner that they have no legal right to their children or any financial support if they leave the relationship. This free service informs our clients quickly and safely of their legal rights. Many of her clients decide to leave the abusive relationship after finding out that they do have rights contrary to what the abuser has told them. To the best of our knowledge, Gillian's Place is the only shelter in Ontario with a lawyer on staff and we are seen as providing a best practice service. Having legal advice provided in a time of crisis relieves significant confusion for abused women when dealing with the intimidating and complex legal system. This expertise allows us to provide an exceptional and unique service to abused

women who are already beaten down. Her credibility throughout the police and justice systems has helped open many doors that would otherwise remain closed to us, and she is an integral member of many committees within the legal system. Through these committees she is able to introduce and implement systemic change to enable the justice system to more effectively respond to abused women. These systemic changes not only impact in our community but throughout the province.

Within this past year, Gillian's Place has focused on expanding Community Partnerships through education and prevention. We have partnered with the Family Counselling Centre and continue to strengthen our working relationship and collaboration with Family and Children Services. Our agency has welcomed other service providers into the shelter to assist with education surrounding domestic violence and the services that Gillian's Place offers.

This has been an exciting and challenging year for Gillian's Place. We accept these challenges and continue to strive and grow as an organization.



“I know that life has changed for my family and that the pattern of abuse has stopped for us because I had the courage to leave.”

— Anonymous



“I felt safe at the shelter; it was the only place I could sleep. I didn’t want to leave the shelter. My children were safe.”

— Anonymous

shelter service numbers fiscal year 2008/2009

- 1,723 Crisis Calls were received by the Shelter
- 267 Lived in the Shelter (146 women and 121 children)
- 55 Women were re-directed due to no available space
- 34 Days was the average length of stay at the shelter
- 12,000+ Women and children have found safe emergency shelter since 1977

outreach service numbers fiscal year 2008/2009

- 304 Women sought emergency support who did not reside in the shelter
- 518 Women obtained Family Law advice and advocacy within the criminal justice system
- 177 Women received support transitioning into an abuse free life
- 70 Children who have witnessed violence against women were seen by a Child & Youth Counsellor through our outreach services
- 1,069 Total women and children served

AS WE REACH OUT,
you give back

For many years our donors have recognized that Gillian's Place strives for excellence in providing a wide range of essential services to meet the diverse needs of abused women and their children in our community. The personal involvement of caring donors, volunteers and our staff has resulted in Gillian's Place serving over 12,000 women and their children since 1977.

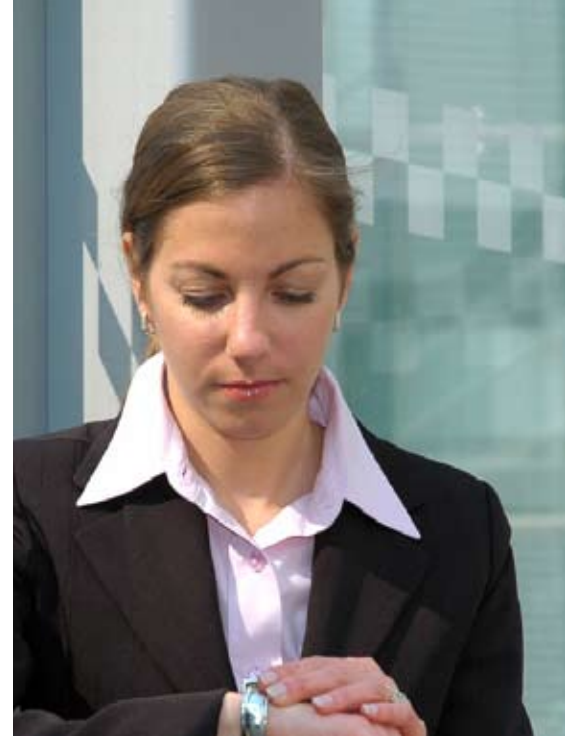
The recurring gifts from our critical long-standing donors reinforce that we continue to provide meaningful services to women in the Niagara region. Over the past year it has also been refreshing to see a new generation of donors to Gillian's Place emerge, either as a result of following in the steps of family or being inspired by a sense of social responsibility, or because their lives may have been touched by violence. In all cases because these donors are concerned about the issue of woman abuse, new and stronger relationships are growing every year to meet the need.

We gratefully recognize the important and direct impact of the wide ranging donor partnerships in our community; individuals giving monthly, in memoriam donations, in honour of birthdays, anniversaries or weddings, Star of Hope at Christmas, major gifts and planned giving. Entrepreneurial businesses and individuals also contribute by taking the initiative to raise funds on our behalf with

a Mother's Day event, a fitness challenge or a milestone anniversary celebration.

Henley Honda has entered into a unique corporate partnership with Gillian's Place to donate \$15,000 a year for 5 years, representing a long term commitment and tremendous public profile and we are extremely thankful. There are also gift sponsorships at our annual events including the Gillian's Place Charity Golf Tournament, Walk A Mile In HER Shoes and Celebration of Women in Music which is centered around International Women's Day. The Annual Glen Merritt Moving Forward event funds our Moving Forward Fund which provides a disadvantaged client with a much needed car and a transportation fund to help women. The Stepping Stones Program created by The Kenneth A. Fowler Family Foundation helps to fund critical expenses as women move to their new life free from violence. All of these sources of support are crucial in our ability to continue to provide services and programs to help women and their children become self sufficient in making the transition to start a new life.

We thank you for your commitment to and support of our success. Let us continue to build collaborative relationships and understanding to put an end to violence against women.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

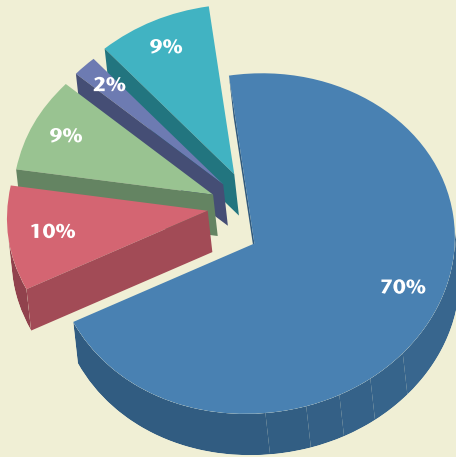
GILLIAN'S PLACE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF

revenue and expenses

for the year ending March 31, 2009

Expenses



- Administration & Operations
- Fundraising
- Public Education
- Outreach & Legal Services
- Emergency Shelter

	2009	2008
Revenue		
Ministry of Community and Social Services	\$ 1,218,316	\$ 970,001
Donations and fundraising	368,532	255,879
Government of Canada	4,096	8,132
Canada Mortgage and Housing	125,600	-
Regional Municipality of Niagara	22,017	18,196
Other programs/grants	17,812	31,487
Investment income	23,530	31,519
	<u>\$ 1,779,903</u>	<u>\$ 1,315,214</u>
Expenses		
Emergency Shelter	\$ 1,174,220	\$ 717,333
Outreach & Legal Services	160,439	148,625
Public Education	149,600	156,512
Fundraising	32,815	48,440
Administration & Operations	145,869	149,254
	<u>\$ 1,662,943</u>	<u>\$ 1,220,164</u>
	\$ 116,961	\$ 95,050
Extraordinary item		
Gain on disposal of capital assets	-	122,836
To be put into reserve	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Surplus (Deficit)	<u><u>\$ 116,961</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 217,886</u></u>

thank you!

“There is no beauty but the beauty of action.”

— Proverb

volunteers

Action is what our volunteers do best. Our volunteers continue to inspire us through their dedication and efforts, showing they want to make a difference in the lives of abused women and their children. They do not volunteer themselves for any sort of recognition; they want to make a difference for the women and children we serve in our community. We would like to acknowledge a number of our volunteers who embrace our many needs and provide caring service in more than one area of our organization.

A volunteer helping in the shelter would perform duties such as sorting and storing donations of food, new household items and clothing. They may help to assist with the room preparation for the settlement of incoming residents. At Christmas time

many volunteers sort incoming donations for the families we serve so Christmas packages are provided to the women prior to Christmas Day. Event volunteer committee members help with Gillian’s Place annual fundraisers. Each member liaises with the community to promote, encourage and secure involvement for these events on behalf of Gillian’s Place. Their duties include attending meetings to discuss ideas, event planning and execution. They also recruit sponsors and participants for our events.

Our donors, volunteers, various committees and staff are vital to the success of our organization. Thank you to the women and men who generously donate their time and many special talents to Gillian’s Place.

committees

Business Advisory Council
Annual Charity Golf Tournament Committee
Annual Walk a Mile in HER Shoes Committee
Celebration of Women In Music Committee

board of directors

Susanne DiLalla
President

Vicki Doidge
Vice President

Karen Smith-Curtis
Secretary

Irene Quinn
Director

Mario Prudente
Director

Sharon Abbey
Director

Kelly McNaughton
Director

Jennifer Ajandi
Director



*Thank you for
supporting us.*

our vision

The elimination of violence against women.

our mission

Gillian's Place (formerly known as Women's Place St. Catharines and North Niagara), is dedicated to the creation of safety, shelter and support of abused women and their children, and to community understanding of the issues of violence against women.



P.O. Box 1387, St. Catharines ON L2R 7J8 • Business Line 905.684.4000

Support Line **905-684-8331**

www.gilliansplace.com