

WOMEN'S HABITAT OF ETOBICOKE



2015/16

ANNUAL REPORT





In Our Own Words

Message from our Board President & Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This year Women's Habitat focused on sharing the expertise we have gained from supporting women and children for almost 40 years. As the demand for our services grow, part of the solution lies in our responsibility to share our best practices and advocate for changes to the systems that keep women trapped in cycles of violence.

At our shelter, 2015 marked a new record high in the number of crisis calls we received. This year our counsellors responded to 1,100 calls from women desperate for support. Sadly, 650 women seeking shelter were turned away.

This shortage of shelter space is directly related to the housing crisis in our city. Because of the difficulty in accessing affordable housing, the average length of time a family stays in our shelter has grown to over a year. Currently, 175,000 families sit on the City of Toronto's social housing waitlist. Without changing the systems that prevent women from accessing housing, families experiencing violence will remain at risk. In our Outreach Centre, this crisis has translated into a sharp increase in the case load of our dedicated Housing Worker, up 73% from the previous year.

In response, we continue our civic engagement; partnering with our clients and community to strengthen our voice. The results have been encouraging. In March 2015, the Province announced the first Permanent Roundtable on Violence Against Women. In November 2015, Toronto City Council unanimously voted in favour of a 20-year Poverty Reduction Strategy. As members of the Poverty Reduction Community Advisory Committee, we are holding the City accountable to deliver on their promises. Details on how our clients have played a fundamental role in this work can be found on page 9.

We are also committed to sharing our expertise globally. In November we were invited to present our client-centred practices to an international audience at the World Conference of Women's Shelters in The Hague, Netherlands. You can learn more about how our trauma-informed approaches benefit women and children who have experienced violence on page 5.

Women's Habitat invests in programs that promote prevention of violence and financial independence, such as the Women in Micro-Enterprise Program supporting women entrepreneurs, and our Girlz Space program which continues to challenge gender stereotypes (more on page 4). This year we were able to provide programming to 104 children and their parents, who frequently share the positive changes they have seen in the self-confidence, school performance and overall well-being of their children.

Still, our client numbers grow. In an effort to maximize the impact of our services, in March 2016 we embarked on a renovation of our Outreach Centre to improve functionality and to enable further service expansion. We are grateful to our supporters for their generous contributions to this project.

At Women's Habitat we witness the strength and resilience of women every day. We know the possibilities when women can harness their power. By educating the public, lobbying our policy-makers and delivering the programs women need to rebuild their lives, we are effecting social change. We are not doing this alone. We are doing this with a community that believes in our work and recognizes that ending violence is an integrated process. With our community behind us, we can do it.

On behalf of the staff, management and Board of Directors of Women's Habitat, thank you.

Deborah Templer, President

Silvia Samsa, Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dayo Kefentse
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MISSION

To provide a safe refuge, counselling, support and advocacy for women and their children who are fleeing violence; while also working towards a more equal society where the inherent value of all women is acknowledged and celebrated.

VISION

All women have choice and opportunity to live their lives in dignity, with equal access to economic and social opportunities, and freedom from violence.

Our Staff Team

Working together to **Break the Cycle of Violence**



(April 1, 2015- March 31, 2016)

ADMINISTRATION

Executive Director

Silvia Samsa

Director of Finance

Lohini Ellis

Resource Systems Manager

Lina Almanzan

Communications and Human

Resource Manager

Sojie Tate

Executive Coordinator

Erin Breau-Barkley

Front Desk Support Worker

Elizabeth Brett

Community Relations Coordinator

Ursula Krubnik

Senior Accounting Coordinator

Cathy Morrison (former)

Sunithira Thuraisingam

Cleaner

Georgette Stona

Administrative Assistant

Tanya Mathurin

SHELTER

Program Manager

Julia Fiddes

Counsellors

Ishraq Abu-Ali

Mariela Chipoco

Faisa Jama

Felicia Obakin

Pauline Richards-Gordon

Victoria Roth

Myra Santone

Child and Family Advocates

Caltha Richards

Carla Rocha

Le Tran

Food Coordinator

Karin Hamann

OUTREACH

Program Manager

Leila Sarangi

Counsellors

Cecilia Nunez

Munice Wright

Transitional Worker

Jennifer Oliverrie

Housing Worker

Mahbooba Hashimi

Young Women's Counsellor

Michelle Fraser

Parent Support Worker

Naedja Truffi

Community Development Worker

Susannah Ireland

Child Care Worker

Barbara Pawlik (former)

Eileen Turney

Administrative Assistant

Debbie Artindale

Milestones:

Munice Wright- 25 years

Mariela Chipoco - 10 years

All the best Lohini!

Lohini Ellis has been an invaluable member of the Women's Habitat team as our Director of Finance since 2014. While we are sad to see her go, we wish her all the best in her retirement and thank her for her expertise and the incredible work she has done for our organization.



Making Space for Girlz

Michelle Fraser & the **Girlz Space Program**

In 2006, Women's Habitat created the Girlz Space program in response to the lack of after school care options for youth in South Etobicoke. With most child care programs ending at age 12, older youth were left without supervision which can sometimes lead to engagement in dangerous activities.

Enter Michelle Fraser, a well-respected advocate, who at the time, was engaging youth in local schools, offering support to girls struggling with poverty, violence and the stress of being a young woman in our patriarchal society.

The program was an instant success. 25 girls attended in the first week and their parents were relieved to have a safe space for their children while they were at work. 10 years later the program continues to be a hit and while youth experiences have changed with the introduction of social media, the topics remain the same: healthy relationships, sexuality and puberty, conflict resolution and school issues. Girls continue to attend for the safety and support they receive, the relationships they build and the food they prepare and share.

Michelle builds the program each year with the girls, surveying them for topics they are interested in. She uses a strengths focused framework to build a holistic program that incorporates life skills, leadership training and recreational activities. The program hosts summer and March break camps using the same framework. Guest speakers are invited and past program graduates return to volunteer and mentor the younger girls.

This year Michelle's incredible work was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement award at the WomanACT Soul of a Warrior event. After 30 years as a Young Women's Counsellor, Michelle has so many success stories she finds it difficult to choose just one. "I love crafts and I always make each girl a birthday card. I've had girls in their twenties who still have that card or the scrap books we make together, it means so much to me." Some have followed in her footsteps, "one of the girls is a mother finishing her Masters in Social Work at Ryerson. I am so proud of her."



Staying Trauma-Informed

Recognizing and Mitigating the **Impacts of Trauma**

This year our Executive Director, Silvia Samsa and Shelter Program Manager, Julia Fiddes, were invited to the World Conference of Women's Shelters in The Hague, Netherlands to present on how we offer shelter, advocacy and counselling using a trauma-informed approach.

In 2015, we renovated our shelter and re-opened with a new space and a new way of working. We reviewed our practices and critically examined their effectiveness through a trauma-informed lens. To be trauma-informed is to have a thorough understanding of the effects of trauma and the prevalence of these experiences for the women who receive our services.

Our clients shared they have been re-traumatized by insensitive, uninformed, or inadequate social systems, including shelter services. We recognize shelters have historically ignored survivor experiences, and that this continues today. At Women's Habitat we are continuously working to end oppressive practices.

We first met with former shelter residents to discuss their experiences. Previously the shelter had design elements created in the name of safety which inadvertently controlled women. Our new design includes in-room safes, providing women autonomy over their medication which had previously been kept in the staff office. New exits are designed so that women can leave the building without needing to inform staff.

We removed the rules that provided us control and comfort, forcing us to follow our client's lead, rather than the instructions of a policy manual. Enforcing rigid rules mirrors the power and control many women experience in violent relationships.

We recognize that we have been a part of the western feminist movement that has silenced the voices of marginalized women, and when we ignore their unique experiences we deny them the service they deserve. A trauma-informed approach means consulting them when we are educating, advocating, researching or reporting on issues that affect them.

We collaborated to provide holistic care by partnering with organizations that share our commitment to trauma-informed practices and we invested the time and resources to train our team, providing tailored training presented or informed by women with lived experience.

At Women's Habitat we actively work to end the outdated service delivery approaches that may trigger survivors, and work to transform these approaches to be effective and avoid re-traumatization. We do this in consultation with the women and children we serve. They are the experts and they must always guide our work.



"I was so surprised by the shelter. I was really worried, but it is such a bright and beautiful place and having our own room is wonderful. We felt welcomed from day one."



**POVERTY
IN THE GTA
IS GROWING**

**THE HOUSING
CRISIS
ISN'T GOING
TO GO AWAY**



Over 175,000 people sit on Toronto's affordable housing wait list and most will continue to wait for years

**OUR SHELTER IS
OVERFLOWING**

We were unable to serve **650** women last year due to lack of space



**OUR OUTREACH
CENTRE
PROGRAMS ARE
FILLING THE GAPS**

We supported **591** women in 2015





83 families secured
SAFE AFFORDABLE
HOUSING



WOMEN IN MICRO-ENTERPRISE PROGRAM is creating financial independence:
100% of program participants were able to supplement their income

- Average monthly cost of a 2 bedroom apartment in Toronto is \$1,288
- Median monthly income of a single parent family is \$1,465

- 16,802 children sit on a wait list for child care subsidy in Toronto
- Only 19% of children aged 1-12 have access to licensed child care



IN 2015
OUR CRISIS LINE
RECEIVED **1,100**
CALLS FROM WOMEN
DESPERATE FOR HELP


IN 2015:

- **1,967** hours of one-on-one counselling were provided at our Outreach Centre
- **143** drop in sessions were provided
- **59** girls received support from our Young Women's Counsellor



Supporting women in **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**:

- 11 clients deputized at City Hall
- Women's Habitat provided 17 public presentations



9,200 INDIVIDUAL
MEALS SERVED AT
OUR CENTRE



Poverty Reduction

Gaining Ground through Civic Engagement

Statistics show that one in four Torontonians are poor. And to a great extent, when we talk about poverty in Toronto, we are talking about women's poverty. With a persistent wage and income gap between women and men, which is larger if she is racialized or indigenous, women are most often the poorest members of households, the poorest people in a neighbourhood, and the poorest citizens of a city. The recent revelation that Toronto has the highest child poverty rate in Canada is a clear indicator of the rate of poverty among mothers in our city.

Over the past year, much of our leadership capacity development has focused on building the skills of women living in poverty to engage in civic processes that inform the municipal poverty reduction strategy. Women's Habitat has promoted these opportunities through our networks, social media and presentations to women participating in our programming.

Our staff worked with Commitment to Community (a broader anti-poverty coalition) to develop a deputation training toolkit geared towards people with lived experiences of poverty. We trained a group of women about how government structures and decision-making processes work, how to navigate City systems, how to read City reports, and how to write deputations, make public presentations and lobby City Councillors. This training has resulted in 11 women deputing this year, 17 public presentations by our agency and 5 women taking on leadership roles by organizing and facilitating local women's only conversations about how poverty impacts them and the solutions to alleviate women's poverty.

In the upcoming year, our Outreach Program Manager, Leila Sarangi, will continue to provide a gender lens on the City's Poverty Reduction Community Advisory Committee. We will urge the City to make real investments into the poverty reduction strategy in the 2017 City Budget and put into action the recommendations of women with lived experience.



L to R: Julie Penasse, Community Advocate/Peer Leader, & Leila Sarangi, Women's Habitat Outreach Program Manager

"My life has been given back to me, now I need to give back. When you better a woman, you better the world."



Volunteer Spotlight

Esther Reid

If you ask most of our employees they will tell you they can’t remember a time without Esther. As a volunteer in our Resource Development department, Esther has created a niche role for herself that has assisted the organization in ways we could only imagine. Having worked in social service for many years, Esther knows capacity is always an issue, and while our staff have the best of intentions to get that storage closet organized, when women are in crisis everything else falls to the bottom of the ‘to do’ list.

Enter Esther, in less than 6 months she has donated over 300 hours to Women’s Habitat. Sharing information at community events, sorting donations, preparing gift baskets; she does it all. With each job she takes on she is incredibly thoughtful and conscientious of the women and children. We call her The Organizing Queen and the title is well deserved. She makes our jobs easier and our processes smoother. Most importantly her work puts valuable in-kind donations into the hands of the women who need them.

“One day last December when I was hosting a ‘boot drive’, a woman came in with winter boots with holes in them. She spotted a pair of black boots she loved, and they looked great on her! Months later I saw her at the centre and she thanked me for those boots. Of course she didn’t need to thank me; I was surprised she remembered me! It was a touching moment.”

Our Supporters

MAJOR FUNDERS		\$250- \$499		< \$100	
Ministry of Community and Social Services	United Way Designated Donation	Barbara Hume-Wright	Xtreme Couture	Stacey Mudie	Janice Marshall
United Way of Toronto & York Region	United Way of Peel Region	Ontario Power Generation Employees’ & Pensioners’ Trust	Newton’s Grove School	Doug Porter	Hatice Pakdil-Notidis
The City of Toronto	Flipp Corporation	Gambles Ontario Produce Inc. Distribution Centre	Emily Chow	Mary-Lou Pozzi	Craig Roxborough
\$20,000 +	ADM Engineering Ltd.	Royal York Road United Church, Jazz at R.Y.	Josie Gallucci	Diana R. Pronay	Aniki Saha-Yannopoulos
The John and Deborah Harris Family Foundation	Wendy Boyd	Triella	Heather McLimont	Richview United Church Women	Audrey Verge
The Jon and Nancy Love Foundation	CHUM Charitable Foundation	Liz Lawson	Paul Zambonini	Susan Robertson	Richard Rodney
Shoppers Drug Mart Foundation	Islington Golf Club, Limited	Marlene Baily	Joyce Feinberg	Nora Sanders	Caryl Sinclair
The Royal LePage Shelter Foundation	Knights of Columbus Council 3401	Eve Giannini	Jackie Goodman	Huda Shah	Janet Walker
\$10,000 +	Leo J. Shapiro & Associates	Stephan Johnson	Lohini Ellis	Dina Spooner	Sandra O’Neill
Goodyear Canada Inc.	Celeste Mendonca	J. M. Nitchie	Carla Rocha	St. Michael’s Ukrainian Catholic Church	Dorothy Winner
The Geoffrey H. Wood Foundation	Porritt Real Estate Inc.	Simon Nyilassy	Deborah Tiller	Ann Stoymenoff	Mayavathie Padayachee
The Hustler Young Men’s Bible Class Foundation	The O’Neil Leger Family Foundation	Wag Jag	Stanley Macdonald	Janet Thompson	Georgia Palantzas
\$5,000 - \$9,999	John Howard Society of Toronto	Anthony D. Wilkinson	Sir Adam Beck Public School	Patricia Thompson	Andrew Kareckas
Centennial Park Golf Centre	Kathleen Howie	Hugh R. Wilson	Anonymous	Amanda Cadette	Linda Kim
Kingsway-Lambton United Church Women	Silvia Samsa	\$100- \$249	Alan Brady	Michelle Centner	Graham King
Canadian Tire, Store Number 070	Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd.	Renette Bourgeois	Lytwyn Resources Inc.	Colleen Cirillo	Catherine Longfield
Nancy Coxford	Elliot Kohn	Julia Fiddes	Wayne McPhail	Maggie Conway	V Meretsky
Joseph Mazzocco	Humber Valley Art Club	United Way of York Region	Effie Vlachoyannacos	Cheryl Davidson-Y	Diane Walters
The Barrett Family Foundation	Etobicoke School of the Arts	St. Georges Junior Public School	Lina Almanzan	Antoinette Delisi-Cromwell	Rosemary Waxman
The C. Dennis Flynn Foundation	Bloordale United Church Women	Joe Canavan	Charles Mendonca	Sandra Downey	Kris Humphrey
\$2,500 - \$4,999	Chien Huang	Margaret Early	Elizabeth Brett	Maggie Evans	Amandeep Thind
The Toronto Calcutta Foundation	Kiwanis Club of Islington	Cheryl Green	Katy Anderson	Heather Faralla	Karen Tognarelli
Canadian Women’s Foundation	Modern Mystery School	Biljana Kostovic	Susan Atkinson	Figure 3	Tala Zarbafi
The Junior League of Toronto	Bank of Montreal Business Finance	Susan Ledingham	Debra Boland	Kathryn Hoffman	Conrad Bourgeois
JP Towing Service & Storage LTD.	Toronto Foundation	Ian Riach	Pauline Brady	Sharon Jazzar	Gary Chuntz
Peter Levitt	Lantic Sugar Inc.	Richview Collegiate Institute	Jill Burnie	Joy Johns	Gail Dice
\$1,000 - \$2,499	Martha Beaumont	Paula Rusak	Maria Casano	Eva Jokay	Natasha Francis
Price Chopper & Fresh Co - Division of Sobeys Ontario	Maersk Canada	G.L. Sanford	Lisa Cirillo	Miriam Kaufman	Lisa Gelman
Fanny and Robert Lavery	Christine Bromstein	St. Leo Catholic School	Robert Eichvald	Kingsway Nursery School	Daniel Isakow
The Meeting House	Peter Dardarian	Florence Walker	Tracy Faiczak	Daina Koly	Susan Lui
Old Mill Toronto	Paulette den Elzen	William E. Wilson	Barbara Fraser	Alice Konieczny	Gabriela Wayment
Apex Graphics	Anna Kennedy	Maria Witco	Lori Grant	Christina Kudryk	Miyo Yamashita
Toronto Police Service	Rotary Club of Etobicoke	Zeta Tau Alpha Toronto Alumnae	Ashley Harris	Stewart and Liz Graydon	James Abernethy
UNIFOR Local 1459 Women’s Committee	Richard Steinecke		Humbervale United Church Women	Robert Bingham	Naheed Ahmed
	Tenacious Satellite Communications Inc.		Maggie Likavec	Ines Conti	Jasmine Akbarali
	The Kiwanis Club of Kingsway Humber		Diane Martello	Elizabeth Duran	Hemal Balsara
	Frances Wilkinson		Larry and Heather McCormick	John Mah	Emina Begg
	Women Aide			Sudeshna Maitra	Elizabeth Bozek
				Alec Monro	Shelly Puri
				Maud Murray	Dagmar Radwan
				Linda and Tom Murtha	Jennifer MacLure
				Shabin Nanji	Leslie Nicholson
					Leah Noel
					Shahanima Zaman
					Body Busters Fitness
					Jennifer A. McLeod
					Christina Wassenberg
					Marina Badali
					Carla Weinstein

If you would prefer to contribute anonymously, please contact Lina Almanzan, Resource Systems Manager, at 416.252.7949 x232 or lalmanzan@womens-habitat.ca. Please note that the above list includes fulfilled contributions for the Shelter Renovation Capital Campaign.

Every day your generosity helps women and children live free of violence. Thank you.

Financials

Statement of Financial Position

as at March 31, 2016 & 2015

Assets	2016	2015
Cash and other current assets	\$ 1,779,400	\$ 3,669,239
Capital assets	2,752,782	809,539
	4,532,182	4,478,778
Liabilities		
Accounts payable & accruals	233,611	575,278
Deferred revenue	77,629	75,174
Mortgage payable	286,995	299,761
	598,235	950,213
Fund Balances		
Capital assets	2,465,787	509,778
Externally restricted	93,071	93,071
Internally restricted	1,037,085	2,654,198
Unrestricted	338,004	271,518
	3,933,947	3,528,565
	\$ 4,532,182	\$ 4,478,778

Statement of Revenue & Expenses

for the year ended March 31, 2016 & 2015

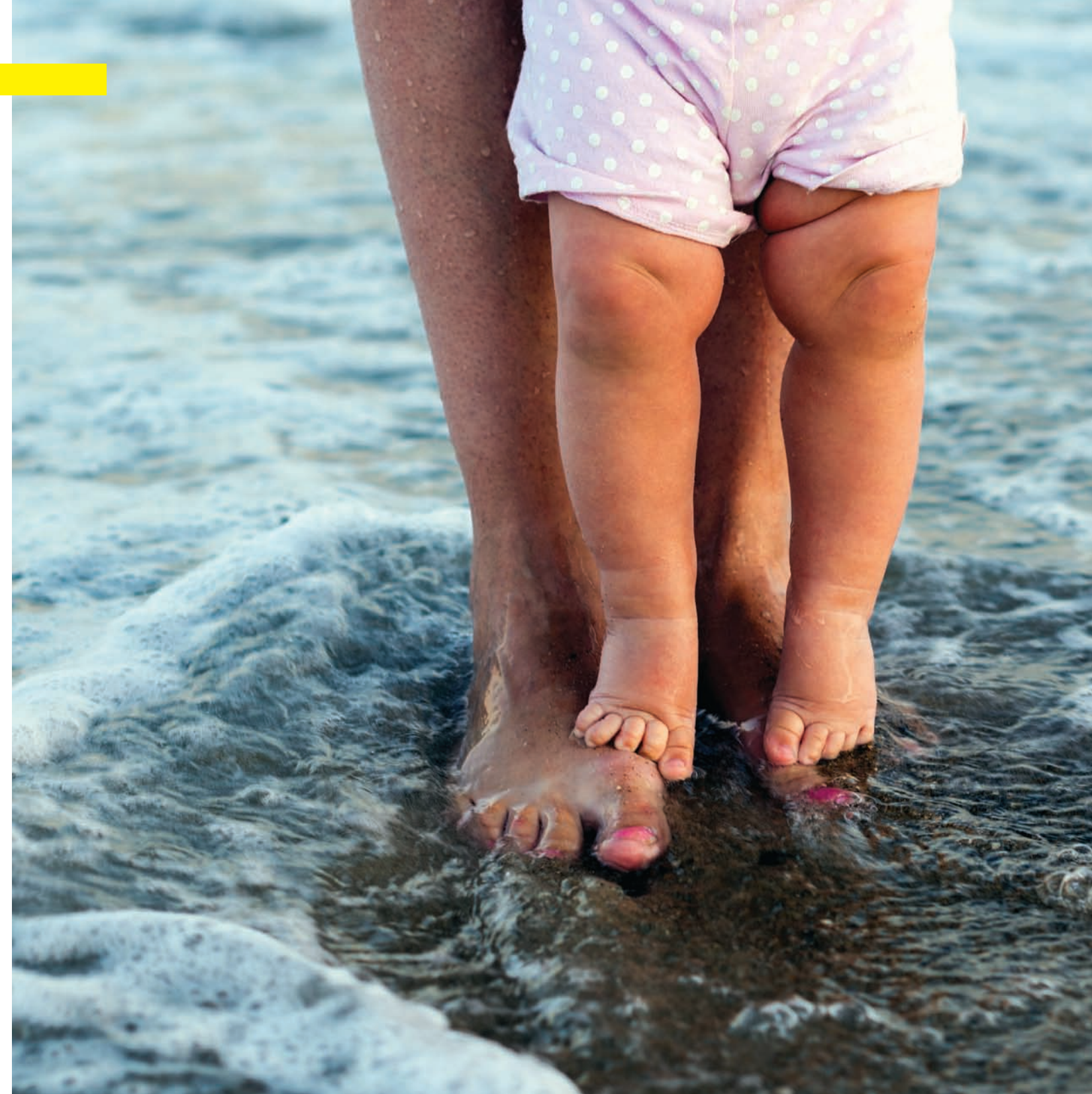
Revenue	2016	2015
Government grants	\$ 1,657,815	\$ 1,630,616
United Way of Greater Toronto	505,904	362,350
Fundraising & foundations ¹	717,239	1,729,869
Other income	8,652	15,090
	2,889,610	3,737,925
Expenditures		
Staffing cost	\$ 1,755,931	\$ 1,508,847
Purchased services	184,347	197,564
Clients' needs	90,986	62,148
Building and occupancy cost	135,375	85,079
Office & administration	103,059	124,633
Amortization	113,026	27,488
Fundraising expenses ²	101,504	255,925
	2,484,228	2,261,684
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses ³	\$ 405,382	\$ 1,476,241

¹ \$555,502 in Fundraising revenue and \$8,652 in other income is designated to a Capital Campaign for the Shelter Renovation Project.

² \$88,581 are expenses related to the Capital Campaign.

³ The Operating deficit for 2016 was (\$33,774). The revenue designated to the Capital Campaign has resulted in a surplus of \$405,382.

** Derived from the complete financial statement of Women's Habitat of Etobicoke for the year ended March 31, 2016 on which auditor Lynne D. Remigio, Chartered Accountant issued an opinion in her auditor's report dated July 14, 2016.



"That day in the sand, when I saw my baby's smile when she was jumping in the water, I realized that no matter what happens in our life, we are still blessed. Because there will always be people and places like Women's Habitat that truly care. And we will continue our journey, getting stronger, and knowing that we are not alone."

CONTACT

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Fax: 416.252.1520
habitat@womens-habitat.ca

Crisis Line:

416.252.5829

Shelter:

416.252.1785

TTY:

416.252.0361

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HABITAT

Charitable Number:
12912-2065-RR0001

