



CAWES ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: AUGUST 6TH, 2020 – VIRTUAL MEETING

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CAWES Vision: Building bridges to a better future for women and children impacted by violence.

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cawes

Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter

Board of Directors 2019 2020

- ▶ Board Chair & President – Janel Lockhat
- ▶ Vice President – Nicole Tomczak
- ▶ Treasurer – Ngoc Pham
- ▶ Secretary – Michelle Jackson
- ▶ Director - Jerri Taylor
- ▶ Director – Barb King
- ▶ Director – Mike Ronnie
- ▶ Director – RCMP Staff Sergeant Jeff McBeth

CAWES LEADERSHIP TEAM

- ▶ Executive Director – Rayann Toner
- ▶ Operations Manager – Heather Pitt
- ▶ Operations Manager – Crisis Intervention – Corrie McKilligan
- ▶ Trauma & Prevention Specialist Therapy – Tosha Duncan
- ▶ DVIRT Manager – Irving Kurz
- ▶ Crisis Team Lead – Amanda Cook
- ▶ Crisis Team Lead – Sue Williams

Message from CAWES Board Chair & President – Janel Lockhat

On behalf of the board I am pleased to present the annual report for the Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter (CAWES), for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020. The challenges of fundraising in the current economy in combination with increasing costs related to an aging facility and increasing client costs led to an overall deficit despite managements efforts to hold the line on spending in all other areas. The positive side to these challenges faced is that there is always a great deal to learn and ways to adapt and meet these challenges, which I feel the team at CAWES certainly has in the past year. From finding new and innovative ways to fundraise, to collaborating with other organizations and better understanding these relationships and continuing to learn and grow in order to better support our clients, CAWES has really stepped up to these challenges.

Just before our year end COVID-19 hit, introducing with it a whole new set of challenges for us and nearly everyone world wide. It reinforced the difficulties of our aging facility and how it affects our ability to continue the working towards the elimination of violence against women particularly in the face of a pandemic.

On behalf of the board I would like to thank the staff, management and volunteers for all their hard work and innovation this year. May the momentum and learning through this past year propel and guide us into the unprecedented 2020-2021 year.



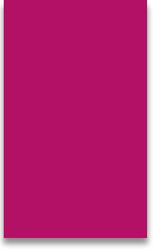
Message from CAWES Executive Director – Rayann Toner

The 2019 – 2020 year at CAWES was one of continued transformation, as staff, management and board, continued to evaluate, learn and grow from our journey into a trauma informed framework. CAWES continued its final year in its commitment to the Open Doors National Shelter Project, which focused on offering services in a trauma informed practice through harm reduction and lowering barriers.

During this past year we have had to address the issue of capacity in terms of shelter resources. Unfortunately, capacity was reduced in order to maintain shelter operations and resources within our means.

CAWES continued to have a high turn-away rate during the 2019 – 2020 season. Our facility remains to be our greatest challenge and hurdle. The physical layout of the building is not conducive to working within a trauma informed framework or supporting clients with high acuity, complex needs or mobility challenges. As our community continues to struggle with the Opioid epidemic and the COVID 19 pandemic, these challenges are magnified.

In terms of Operations, there was a changing of the guard as Tosha Duncan stepped into Education & Training in terms of the Trauma Prevention Specialist role, and Corrie McKilligan stepped into the Operations Manager position alongside Heather Pitt. The focus during this period was training and education for staff within the trauma informed model and aligning with best practices in the shelter sector. Staff were committed to working in the best way possible to meet the needs of the clients we serve. However, the practical limitations of capacity management strategy were challenging and created higher barriers than intended.



In terms of community collaborations, CAWES continued to maintain its membership in the Alberta Council of Women Shelter and Women's Shelter's Canada. In ACWS, CAWES is occupying a seat on the Data Committee and the Training and Education Committee. With WSC, I had the privilege to attend the National Shelter Conversations in Ottawa, Ontario. Our membership in both ACWS and WSC are crucial and critical in terms of advocacy within a feminist framework, contextualizing data/trends, and standardizing professional competencies across the sector and across the globe.

CAWES presented on the international stage for the 4th consecutive time at the World Conference of Women Shelters in Kaohsiung City, Taiwan. Tosha Duncan and myself, presented on Humility in Management – Taking the Time to Reflect, Realign and Simply Breathe, which focused on our experiences, challenges and celebrations with transformative change management in regards to the Open Doors Project. CAWES later held a webinar on Lessons Learned with CCIG Solutions, Jo Louise Huq and Kathryn York on the Evaluation Framework.

Locally, CAWES is committed to the criminal justice response of our coordinated community collaborative with the Crown Prosecutor's Office, Red Deer City RCMP, and The Outreach Centre. The shelter has also expanded its interest and awareness in the Central Alberta Addictions Consortium, and our connections to local partners, Safe Harbour, Central Alberta Sexual Assault Centre, Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association, Jim Freeman's Psychotherapy Group, and Child Advocacy Centre.

At the end of the fiscal year, the contract that CAWES had with Alberta Health Services for Partner Safety Check Navigator had come to an end.



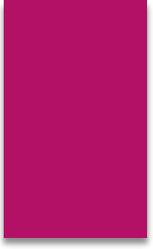
The shelter will continue to support and collaborate with the Apex Counselling and the Jim Freeman Ltd., to provide victims of domestic violence the best service possible that addresses the needs within our community.

During the year, our highlights included funding from Solicitor General Victims of Crime Grant was renewed for 3 years at a value of \$450,000. This funds one position at CAWES and then contributes to the remaining positions within Domestic Violence Integrated Response Team.

Under the determination and leadership of Jerri Taylor, Chair of the Capital Committee our dream of a new building continues to flourish with funding from CMCH for seed funding and ongoing consultations and conversations with the City of Red Deer about the adjacent Scout Hut land.

Although we have our challenges ahead of us, we will persevere.

Additional celebrations include the pilot for the first ever CBT- DBT Therapy Program at CAWES and the continuation of the Nurturing Parenting Program in tandem with Child Support. CAWES groups have expanded to Smart Recovery, Anxiety to Calm, and the peer client group, Women Connected. These programs continue the tradition of CAWES innovation and commitment to trauma informed, best practices.



Thank you to the Government of Alberta, funders and donors that continue to fund and support our work and dream for the future. Without your continued support, the landscape would be bleak and the future would be dark for the women and children that we serve. You help us keep the porch light shining even through the darkest days.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the women and children that seek refuge in our shelter. I am truly astonished and in awe of the resilience and fortitude it takes to move to survivorship. I am proud of the work that CAWES Staff and Leadership Team have accomplished. This work is “heartstring” work; it is connected to heart, core beliefs and the very essence of humanity. I am excited about the journey that CAWES is on. As the fiscal year was drawing to a close, the pandemic hit Alberta. CAWES staff answered the call in our most difficult time, and for that I am eternally grateful. We have faced many challenges together as a team and as a sector, but I am confident we will rise to the occasion. Keep calm and CAWES carry on.

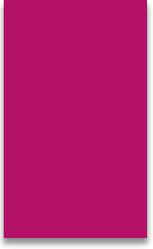


Message from Marketing & Events Coordinator – Roxanne Kirton

Despite plenty of challenges this past year, we achieved many successes; a testament to the incredible people that make up this organization. Thanks to our community's generosity, we had a successful year in fundraising. We are grateful for every gift—no matter the size—and remain committed to carefully allocating every dollar to optimize our client's care.

Our Volunteers were busy this past year with various events, and we are grateful for their dedication and countless contributions to CAWES. Without the help of our 150+ volunteers, we could not achieve the financial success needed to provide our many programs & services to our clients. Some such events included the Annual Sutter Fund Charity Golf Classic, Royal LePage Charity Golf Tournament, CAWES Spring Raffle, SHELTER Ribfest, and more. On behalf of all of us at CAWES, thank you for continuing to support our families in need; your investment in the Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter is deeply appreciated.

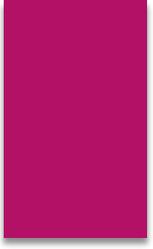
Earlier in the year, the Annual Royal LePage Charity Golf Tournament held another very successful event; all thanks to the hard working group of Realtors who work tirelessly on this long-running respected tournament. During its eight (8) years, the Royal LePage Charity Golf tournament has raised over \$400,000 in support of the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, of which CAWES has been the main recipient in our area. We are incredibly thankful for their ongoing support!



In September 2019, CAWES embarked on the largest fundraising initiative it has ever been a part of; the first Annual SHELTER RIBFEST took place September 13-15 and garnered rave reviews from all who attended and participated in this incredible 3-day event. Over \$21,000 was raised in its inaugural year, drawing close to 6,000 people. This fun, outdoor festival including miscellaneous food vendors, children's entertainment, beer garden, live bands, and rib teams from all over the country, has the potential to become a major summertime event in Central Alberta. Plans for the 2020 event have been put on hold, due to COVID-19, but we have full intentions of holding the event again in August 2021, providing we're able to resume some sense of normalcy by then.

For many years now, CAWES has created a traditional mailout campaign in the form of a "call to action", and sent to over 4,500 households throughout Central Alberta. Although, not as lucrative as in previous years, this year's campaign generated just over \$37,000 from 131 constituents. This form of fundraising continues to be popular with many of our elderly and rural supporters.

In late November a group of ambitious young ladies came to us with a very unique and fun third-party fundraising idea called the Community Waffle. This simple and interactive "raffle" took place online during the month of December. Proceeds raised during this period went to support CAWES, and generated over \$19,000!



These types of events really help to increase awareness in the community, and raise much-needed funds. We can't thank Jodie, Tracy, and Jennifer enough for their incredible support (and fabulous idea)!

The first ever CAWES Spring Raffle raised over \$17,000 in March of this year. Six (6) amazing prizes were up for grabs, providing ticket holders with Six (6) chances to WIN! Tickets were available from participating CAWES Staff and Volunteers with the draw taking place on April 1 2020. 2,000 tickets were printed and sold for \$10 each. COVID-19 caused a major interruption in ticket sales near the end, but we were still very pleased with the outcome, given the circumstances.

To those who gave through donations, sponsorships, grants, special events, legacy gifts—and to the volunteers who gave the gift of their precious time—we say a resounding thank you! The philanthropic support of the Central Alberta community is critical to our ongoing operation. It is only because of the dedication, commitment and hard work from these individuals that we have been able to achieve the success we have.



Message from Operations Manager – Crisis Intervention Corrie McKilligan

During the past year, the CAWES Crisis Intervention Team has remained committed to the Open Doors and Trauma informed frameworks. 327 Women were served residentially, along with 203 children. 365 women also accessed the shelter as walk-in clients. Due to implementing capacity management, we have seen a decrease in walk in clients. Anxiety to Calm and SMART recovery groups were made available to our clients and were presented by the team leads. Many of our staff attended Civil Liberties training in February. In June of 2019, the Sexual Health Nurses starting attending shelter one time per week, and are able to offer clients pregnancy tests, tests for STD's and support.

In fall of 2019, the CBT program began. This allowed for all clients, residential and outreach to be able to access Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with our in-house therapist, Tosha Duncan, free of charge. Client feedback is very positive and the program is proving highly beneficial, filling a much needed gap of support for our clients.

Though 2020 has brought a lot of challenges with the COVID pandemic , the team has maintained dedicated towards providing the services needed by our women and children in a positive, proactive manner, supporting not only our clients but each other in these challenging times.



Message from Operations Manager – Heather Pitt

The Intensive Case Managers (ICM) work off site. The (ICM) Team builds on existing programming (in shelter and in the community) to provide intentional and intensive specialized support services for women and children leaving Domestic Violence. This may include women not wanting to access the shelter. This may include: assessing danger, developing safety plans, collaborative risk management, support in obtaining or maintaining safe, appropriate housing, optimizing current shelter spaces through a coordinated shelter network, and providing coordination of informal support systems (friends and family), and coordinating comprehensive wrap-around community services for the family. At this time The ICM's team has served 154 women and 29 children in the community.

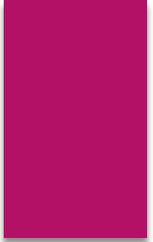
The Women's Connected Group has been a great success. The idea of the group is to have women connect with women to help build resiliency and build supports with each other. We started with about 3 women and now have 6 women who come very regularly to the group with more being referred. We are in the future looking to maybe start a second group.

Nadine Posterski has been working very hard to have CAWES presence in the Rural Areas over the last year by connecting with Inter-agency meetings around Central Alberta. Making our services known and how they can be accessed.

The ICM's have done several presentations on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and Self Care for professionals and how important self-care is to professionals and our clients.

We will see how the next year unfolds with the pandemic.





Message from Nurturing Parenting Facilitator – Kerstyn Van Sandick

Upon assuming the role of sole NPP facilitator in November of 2019 I chose to put further emphasis on offering not only sessions within the shelter but within the clients home, allowing us to view the families within their natural environment and to aid in building relationships with both the parent and the children. Providing home visits enabled us to offer further direct supports in relation to parent/ child relationships and assisting with challenges with behaviors, routines, transitions, development, emotional awareness and regulation, safety planning and so on. I personally, have worked directly with 17 children and 3 adolescents, in both 1-on-1 and with parents and in family-group settings.

During my time working with adolescents, I quickly became aware of how underdeveloped our programming was to support not only this age group but for the parents of adolescents as well. We are currently in the works of further development in programming for adolescents and for parents of adolescents and young adults alike. This allowed me to envision further opportunities to expand our programming for other demographics, so far including:

- Native American families;
- To have Nurturing Parenting Programming adapt to the unique needs of blended families in the LGBTQ+ communities;
- Although further focus into families being impacted by substance use, misuse, parenting and co-parenting in recovery from substances has already been implemented and prioritized in the programming in this past year my projection for the upcoming year will be to continuing strengthening our supports and programming for past, current and future clients and families.



Having several professional connections with the “Addictions and Recovery” community within Central Alberta, I have been able to establish strong relationships with several agencies and services in respect to the Nurturing Parenting Program including: Safe Harbour, Turning Point, Alberta Health Services, CMHA, Red Deer Community Health Centre, both Public and Catholic school system, Juliettas Place and McMann; AA, NA, CA, and SMART Recovery ; these relationships have allowed for direct referrals in both directions, allowing myself to offer further supports and resources to clients and allowed their agencies to refer new clients to NPP as well. I have also had the opportunity to build and strengthen further relationships within Child Protective Services within Red Deer and surrounding communities.



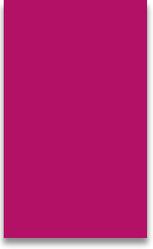
Message from Trauma Prevention Specialist Therapist – Tosha Duncan

The primary focus of therapy is improving quality of life and developing strategies to manage symptoms which interfere with overall health and well-being on a daily basis. Symptoms most frequently are associated with depression, anxiety, and PTSD, formally and informally diagnosed.

The process of therapy is client-directed where a respect for self-determination is central. Goals often include learning to develop a strong sense of self and identity, establishing or repairing relationships with children and family members, and harm reduction and relapse prevention. This work is very intense and difficult, requiring incredible strength and courage to engage in.

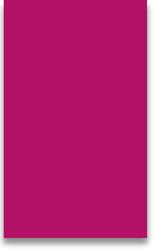
There is a significant psycho educational component of therapy. Common topics or themes are: healthy relationships, boundaries, the implications of experiencing toxic stress and early adversity, and how the experience of trauma impacts brain development as well as resiliency and repair work.

As a therapist, I have the privilege to hear the stories of the women I serve and to walk alongside them on this very difficult journey, which often involves exploring traumas which have occurred across a lifetime, frequently commencing in childhood with abuse and neglect. Women explore their pasts to understand their present circumstances and learn their coping strategies are adaptive and have supported survival, being developed out of necessity. As safety and security is experienced, women determine which strategies they wish to keep and those that no longer serve them well.



On a weekly basis 4-5 women are seen in virtual sessions or connected with via telephone daily. It is common for the therapy program to receive and respond to an additional 4 or 5 contacts daily, to review strategies or to clarify the work the women are engaged in. The therapy program works intensely with referrals from the Residential and ICM programs and has ongoing contact with women from all over central Alberta currently. One of the greatest strengths of this program is sessions are not limited. This is essential to providing the level of care required in trauma work.





Message from DVIRT Manager – Irving Kurz

The Domestic Violence Intervention & Response Team (DVIRT) is the collaborative joint venture between the Shelter and the Outreach Centre. This integrated team, co-funded and comprised of four caseworkers from both agencies under the supervision of jointly-appointed manager, operates from the Dragonfly Centre and from the RCMP Detachment.

Services are delivered primarily to intimate partner violence victims who are in contact with the criminal justice system through the Innisfail, Sylvan Lake, Blackfalds, and Red Deer RCMP, as well as the Lacombe Police Service. Clients are provided practical and emotional supports through their involvement with the justice system, referrals to appropriate programs and agencies, and a voice into the Domestic Violence Court through the Court Interview program. For the DVIRT program during the fiscal year, the team has reported 806 open cases, 760 ongoing cases, and 1024 closed cases.

In September, funding for DVIRT was secured for the next three years. The Alberta Justice and Solicitor General approved the \$150,000 per year Victims of Crime Fund grant application for DVIRT until June of 2022. This is fine surcharge money, collected by the Courts from offenders, rather than tax dollars.



The past year has seen DVIRT, like every other program, face significant challenges. Both sites closed their doors to face-to-face contact with clients due to COVID-19 restrictions, making caseworkers reliant on telephone and video conferencing. Delays in criminal, family, and civil court proceedings will continue well into the Fall of 2020, imposing additional hardship on clients who want to move on with their lives.

Open Files: 806

Ongoing Files: 760

Closed Files: 1024



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Every individual has a right to a life free of abuse.

Society has a responsibility to provide safety from abuse.

Education and treatment have an effect on reducing abuse.

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CAWES BELIEF STATEMENT



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Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter