

SARA
FOR WOMEN



ANNUAL REPORT



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michelle Puffer, SPHRI

Welcome back to another year of change, both in the world and with SARA for Women. This year saw SARA close a vital program due to a variety of factors, not the least of which included increased costs and loss of funding. In doing that we revamped a number of other programs to offer some of these same services out of alternative locations, such as Penny's Place and our Abbotsford offices.

In a world of change, people move on, making room for others to join. We always want to work in alignment with the point where we are now — rather than staying in the past — while we use our history to ensure that we always strive to do better in the future. For those that have stayed and those that have now joined, we have set new goals to continue working together for the women we serve, with them as our priority.

One of the biggest hurdles we dealt with in 2022 was the ongoing bargaining for our staff new Collective Agreement, we spent an inordinate amount of time working on essential services planning and working through what to do if the worst happened. We were so thankful that the new agreement was ratified on March 28, 2023 and we avoided a strike; however, that meant retroactive pay to April 1, 2022, which hurt the bottom line as we haven't yet received

those funds from our funders. We expect to see those funds reimbursed within the first six months of the new fiscal and updated financial contracts (as those were also behind one to two years due to bargaining and other factors) from all funders to ensure our next fiscal is strong.

Fiscal responsibility is on all of us at SARA, from frontline staff, up to the Board. It means always reviewing with an eye on what our funded contracts require, what the program requirements are and who we are helping and how. That means we don't waste resources, not our own and not the governments. That means adjusting programs to be in line with what is asked of us, it means sharing resources, it means working smarter not harder. It means working together, both with internal and external stakeholders.

One of the things that has remained the same with SARA is that we have a team dedicated to helping women move forward positively in their lives. That we are committed to figuring out the best way to do that so that we are assisting, while not enabling.

To reiterate my ongoing theme — we work together, to do better! We work together to support and empower women to realize their unlimited potential and live a life free from violence.

SARA VALUES...

Feminism

- + We believe in gender equality
- + We stand for women's rights, including reproductive rights
- + We advocate for and empower women

Respect, Dignity & Compassion

- + We strive for diversity and inclusion
- + We seek to understand
- + We recognize and challenge biases



We acknowledge that we gather and work on the traditional, ancestral, unceded and shared territories of the STÓ:LŌ people, particularly the Semà:th, Kwantlen, Sq'éwlets, Mâthxwi and Xwchíyò:m first nations.

We acknowledge our traditional hosts and thank them for their graciousness in allowing us to carry out this work on their lands.

Integrity & Trust

- + We are consistent in our words and actions
- + We provide clear expectations for women and SARA
- + We learn and grow from our experiences
- + We operate with responsibility, accountability, and sustainability

Leadership

- + We communicate a clear vision and mission
- + We are courageous and innovative
- + We partner and collaborate.

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SARA FOR WOMEN: SUPPORT, ACCEPTANCE, RESOURCES, ACTION

We are a feminist non-profit society providing safe refuge and community-based resources for women in the Fraser Valley. We promote and support women's efforts to achieve domestic, political, and social equality.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Grace Saris
Board Chair

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Vice Chair

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Community Engagement Chair

Corinne Molnar
Finance Chair

Liane Teubert
Executive Committee Chair

Heather Beckett
Board Member

Annmarie Charker
Board Member

Kristi Rutherford
Board Member



A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Grace Saris



On behalf of the volunteer Board of Directors at SARA for Women Society, we sincerely express our heartfelt appreciation to our employees, funders, donors, members and Community partners for their passion, commitment and support.

Our foundational pillars remain strong through evolving change, purposeful prudent operational strategies and strategic leadership. We are an organization founded on the values of feminism; leadership through teamwork; integrity and trust; respect, dignity and compassion.

We look forward in 2025 to celebrating our 50th Anniversary milestone of living these values through our purpose, support and empowerment of women to realize their unlimited potential to live free from violence.

Thank you for your passion to all that is SARA ...

Support, Acceptance,
Resources, Action



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION



Date: April 28th, 2023

RBC

Pay to the order of: SARA FOR WOMEN \$ 5,000

Five thousand dollars XX / 100 dollars

In Loving memory of Kamaljit Sandhu

RBC
Signature

SARA FOR WOMEN SOCIETY

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2023 with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,050,036	\$ 2,154,345
Restricted cash	243,118	230,826
Accounts receivable	170,985	122,245
Goods and services tax receivable	16,022	16,897
Prepaid expenses	22,272	23,824
	2,502,433	2,548,137
Capital assets	957,222	986,566
	\$ 3,459,655	\$ 3,534,703
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 128,547	\$ 260,695
Wages payable	242,605	52,736
Vacation payable	98,863	117,560
Deferred revenue and grants	1,263,477	1,082,712
Security deposits	11,798	11,865
Current portion of long term debt	248,247	10,768
	1,993,537	1,536,336
Long term debt	—	248,246
Deferred capital contributions	179,010	207,298
Replacement reserves	335,105	312,459
	2,507,652	2,304,339
Net Assets		
Invested in capital assets	529,565	520,254
Internally restricted	1,023,306	1,023,306
Unrestricted	(601,268)	(313,196)
	952,003	1,230,364
	\$ 3,459,655	\$ 3,534,703

HOUSING & SHELTER



TRANSITION HOUSING

Mission Transition House (MTH)

Mission Transition House (MTH) had many successes this fiscal year! The team was able to secure housing for the majority of the women that received our services and continued to support with on-going resources once they had left to ensure there was no gaps in service. MTH started a gardening project with the goal of having some gardening beds to plant vegetables and herbs with the women and children. The hope is to use this as a therapeutic way to connect with the families. As always, some situations can be very challenging and the team has had to come up with creative ways to work with the legal system as some women fleeing abuse have acquaintances within that network. Collaboration with resources to ensure the women's safety is always paramount.

Abbotsford Transition House (ATH)

Abbotsford Transition House (ATH) is the only transition house for women and children in Abbotsford. ATH serves women and children fleeing domestic violence and/or at risk of violence. ATH provides a short-term, emergency stay of 30 days. During

this time, there are staff present onsite 24/7, working with the residents to achieve short-term goals such as housing, custody orders, income assistance and/or subsidy applications and counselling. ATH provides all immediate necessities at no-cost including food, shelter, laundry and showers.

During this fiscal year, ATH was able to get the outdoor ramp upgraded and refinished, adding to the safety of the residents. Because of the ease of restrictions post-COVID, staff were able to begin transporting clients to appointments again. This helped in many situations as several clients had out of town appointments. Several women and children were admitted to second-stage housing with SARA for Women, which helped families have a seamless transition from domestic violence, to emergency housing, to safe, second-stage housing.

Some barriers that both of the transition house programs faced was the increase in calls for large families, some with 4 plus children, and the lack of ability to accommodate large families in the program. The transit strike in 2023 posed one of the greatest barriers to clients, especially given that almost all residents had low-income.



TRANSITION HOUSING STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

Mission Intakes:
(# people served)

35 **41**
women children

Abby Intakes:
(# people served)

45 **45**
women children

Mission Turn-Aways:

730 **347**
women children

Abby Turn-Aways:

1,003 **577**
women children

Mission Move-Outs:

30 **38**
women children

Abby Move-Outs:

46 **30**
women children

SECOND STAGE HOUSING

Santa Rosa

Unfortunately, SARA saw the evacuation and eventual closure of Santa Rosa in December 2022 due to instability of the structure brought on by severe weather. The women and children that were living at SR were rehoused with in other SARA programs and with client's families.

In total there were 8 women and 3 children that were evacuated and rehoused in Dec 2022 – March 2023.

Christine Lamb Residence (CLR)

The Christine Lamb Residence continues to remain at full capacity and has been able to reimplement different workshops and information sessions for the women and children.

CLR housed 60 women and 80 children (April 2022 – March 2023)

SARA has been fortunate to connect with some amazing Community Partners who have offered great opportunities to the gals at CLR. Writing with Love, Financial Literacy and Paint Events have been well received! As well as the continued support from Fraser Health (Immunization Clinics) and local hair stylists giving complimentary haircuts to all women and children.

Cheryl Smith Residence (CSR)

Construcion of the Cheryl Smith residence nears completion, with the final touches and move in date set for Spring of 2023

CSR will be able to house 12 women and up to 24 children in this pet friendly building!

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Warm Zone

From April 2022 – September 2022, The Warm Zone continued to run our capacity extension shelter which provided space for up to 8 women to stay. Each of these women were welcome to stay 24/7.

Due to the pandemic to ensure we were following safe spacing distances, we continued to provide modified door services to all the women in our community. These resources included access to three meals a day plus snacks, showers, laundry, advocacy, resources, hygienic products, harm reduction, overdose prevention site and more.

On September 30, 2022 the Warm Zone had to close their doors until a new location could be secured.

Community engagement events:

- On July 11th we hosted a fun summer event in the Warm Zone parking lot where we had rented a food truck, had income assistance and health care providers come onsite, and provided henna as an activity for folks in our community.
- In August staff attended International drug overdose awareness day, where we set up a table and provided SARA resources alongside community partners.
- This year we were a part of the Abbotsford Homeless count.
- Penny's Place hosted a vaccination clinic onsite for women in our community

WARM ZONE STATS

April 2022 – Sept 31, 2022 ↓

1,805 Door Services*	1,091 Shelter Beds	230 Outreach
1,325 Bus Tickets	1,602 Food Program	133 Showers
24 Care Packages/ Food hampers	6,957 Harm Reduction	106 Donated Meals



PENNY'S PLACE STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

2,462

Clients Served

255

Turn-Aways

2,017

Shelter Beds

1,817

EWR Beds

1,867

Meals Served

280

Donated Meals

1,404

Showers

2,808

Laundry

2,675

Bus Tickets

901

Application Supports

107

Naloxone Kits Distributed

2,571

Harm Reduction Supplies




Penny's Place

Penny's Place has successfully been running a 24/7 six bed shelter for women. During extreme weather, Penny's Place is able to offer an additional three beds to women in our community. In October 2022 when our outreach moved over to Penny's Place from the Warm Zone, we quickly saw a surge in women utilizing the services being offered onsite to help with their self-identified goals. This included an increase with shelter guests getting connected with medical and health professionals. Additional services being offered consist of bus tickets, harm reduction, clothing, phone and internet access, snacks and meals, hygiene products and referrals to additional resources.

26

Overdoses Reversed at Warm Zone & Penny's Place





“I was fearful my partner would have me and my children deported. Thanks to the outreach program for helping me connect with an Immigration legal aid.”

Outreach Client

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

SARA's Outreach program in the Fraser Valley provides free and confidential support to women (and their dependent children) who have experienced or are at risk of abuse, threats or violence.

Outreach

- + The Multicultural program provides women of all ethnic backgrounds with Information, advocacy, support, or accompaniment to access community and government agencies. For cultural reasons, some clientele do not report crimes to the police but are open to seeking Outreach services. The program helps bridge the language gap and supports women in navigating the resources and services they require.
- + The Housing Outreach Program supports women in securing safe, affordable housing, connecting them to other resources within SARA and community resources.
- + The Court Outreach program provides women with accompaniment and support to attend hospital, medical, and legal proceedings, including police involvements requested by survivors.
- + Clients of SARA have free access to an in-person or phone legal information booth provided by a lawyer reserved for women participating in SARA programs. The women can receive up to 30 minutes of summary advice and Information on Family Law to help make informed decisions regarding their legal issues.



HIV Program

- + The HIV program is part of the HIV clinical case management team for the client and performs supportive tasks to assist in the prevention of the progression of HIV and promotes optimal health for the client base.

Practicum Students

- + In the last fiscal year, Practicum students were placed with the Outreach program to enhance their learning about the agency and the roles and responsibilities of the job. Practicum students reported that they appreciated the one and one client interactions and learning about the various programs offered within the agency.

OUTREACH + HIV STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

1,302

Multicultural
Outreach
Clients Served

2,557

Mainstream
Outreach
Clients Served

88

Accessed SARA
Legal Booth

608

Received Legal
Support

523

Accessed
Housing
Services

11

clients cases
were managed
in HIV Program

“Thank you for helping me with my medical appointments. I can finally see. Without the program’s support, I couldn’t be independent.”

HIV Program Client



Harm Reduction & Oversight Prevention Sites Program

- + The Harm Reduction program includes oversight of harm reduction supplies to other programs in Society, orienting and supporting a Peer to Peer team to carry out their duties within the harm reduction framework. The program facilitates and works with the public in Community Harm Reduction training and needle recovery in the community.
- + The Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) program supports individuals accessing the Outdoor Inhalation Overdose Prevention Site, including administering Naloxone to individuals using illicit substances.
- + In October 2022, the OPS program operating at the Warm Zone transitioned from onsite to providing emergency overdose prevention site response services (EOPS) in the community to witness consumption and connect with the vulnerable population.

HARM REDUCTION STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

21,031

Clean Needles Distributed

739

Naloxone Kits

OPS STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

8,355

Clean Needles Distributed

424

Naloxone Kits

669

Improper Needles Disposed

35

Overdoses Reversed

BOTH PROGRAMS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

4,392

Peer Volunteer Hours



Pregnancy Outreach Program (POPs)

- + The Pregnancy Outreach Program (POPs) offers nursing and outreach support for mothers with high-risk pregnancies and families prenatally and six months postpartum. POPs is dedicated to providing women who are experiencing high-risk pregnancies, teens, women with drug or alcohol concerns, and women with low income with the following services: pre-natal classes, bi-weekly lunches, group and one-on-one support, referrals to other community resources, dietary and health information including food skills classes. There has been a higher demand for formula and diapers this year due to the higher cost of living. We are grateful for the many donations received.
- + Parenting support, dental hygiene, breastfeeding, food skills and hearing clinics were some of the initiatives for the year. Picnics in the park were held in July and August. Women report feeling less isolated and well-supported by the program. Special

lunches such as Christmas, "Galantines," and Easter were enjoyed by Moms and their children. We are grateful for community partners such as Northview Church, Parkside Church, All Saints Anglican Church, St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Só Luxury and others who have donated resources and gifts to make women feel special.

- + A Hearing Clinic was held during one of the lunches. One of the women was tested and fitted for hearing aids on the spot. Reporting back, she explained how her life had changed because she could now hear.
- + POPs has made a concerted effort to reach our Indigenous women. We have had two Elders from the Friendship Centre join the lunches. Aboriginal women receiving service increased from six to fourteen. Two new immigrant women received service.



POPS STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

23

Prenatal
Referrals

11

Births

172 + 168

Women + Children Attended
Lunch and Learn

COUNSELLING

Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling, and Empowerment (PEACE)

The PEACE Program provides free, confidential counselling for children and youth (ages 4-18) who have witnessed and or experienced abuse, threats, violence in the home, or other relationship violence.

The program offers safety skills and strategies and supports children to understand that they are not at fault for the abusive actions of others. Using various tools, counsellors help children label feelings they have experienced due to abuse witnessed and/or experienced and understand healthy ways of dealing with and expressing emotions.

The PEACE Program has been fully staffed and stable this year. Since COVID, getting starting groups for children and youth has been difficult. Throughout the year, there were several success stories. In one situation, the Counsellor worked with a client who had been severely neglected and controlled. This child had become very emotionally dysregulated. The foster mother and counsellor worked hard to model

self-regulation and healthy boundary-setting. They also enjoyed watching him connect with new coping strategies and apply them to his life.

Children from Mission, Abbotsford and Aldergrove received support. Counsellors were able to provide services to the following nationalities: Caucasian, Indo-Canadian, Indigenous (including first nations and Metis) and Latino.

PEACE STATS April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

395
Clients

751
Service Hours

STV STATS

April 2022 – March 31, 2023 ↓

1071

Clients

1640

Service Hours

Stop the Violence (STV)

Stopping the Violence Program provides free individual and group counselling for women who currently experience or have previously experienced intimate partner violence and may have experienced childhood trauma and abuse. Counselling continues to be offered in person and by phone or Zoom.

Through working with qualified counselling staff, women learn to recognize and understand the dynamics and impacts of abuse. Safety plans may be developed. Women learn new coping strategies and assertiveness skills. Self-confidence and self-worth are strengthened. Women feel supported as they learn new skills to enhance their quality of life. Clients also report developing parenting skills that improve their relationships with their children. Some women return to school, and others enter the job market for the first time. Other women continue to struggle with mental health and addiction issues due to the trauma they have experienced. Of the 1071 women who received services, 791 stated they struggle with or have received a mental health diagnosis.

Due to a grant, we increased the number of counsellors this year, which helped with the waitlist.

Women from Abbotsford, Mission, Langley and Aldergrove received services. Counsellors provided services to the following nationalities: Caucasian, Indo-Canadian, First Nations, Metis and Latino.



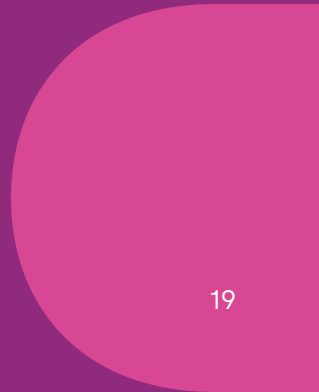
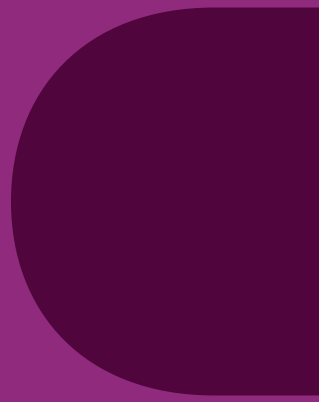


SARA IN THE COMMUNITY



SARA for Women is grateful to receive donations from organizations, businesses and members of our community and we always enjoy getting out to attend a variety of community events, functions and job fairs — meeting you where you're at so we can continue to meet our clients where they're at. If you see us around come say hi!





SARA for Women would like to express heartfelt appreciation to all our donors, volunteers, and funders who make it possible for us to support vulnerable women and children in our communities.

Primary Funders:



United Way
Lower Mainland



fraserhealth



BC HOUSING



Public Health
Agency of Canada



BRITISH
COLUMBIA
Gaming Commission

OUR MISSION

SARA supports and empowers women to realize their unlimited potential and to live free from violence.

OUR VISION

To be feminist leaders in a just world where all women are respected, valued, and empowered.



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SARAFORWOMEN.CA

SARA
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