

2008/2009  
**annual  
report**





# Mission & Vision

## **Our Mission**

Discovery House provides integrated residential and community services for abused women with children to enable them to live safely in the community.

## **Our Vision**

Our communities are free of family violence.



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# Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director





# Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society

Since 1980, Discovery House has been helping women and children who experience family violence by providing them with a safe place to live and a wide range of long-term emotional and practical supports. We have 19 self-contained apartments and are the most secure facility in southern Alberta. Families may reside in Discovery House for six months although it is not uncommon for high needs clients to stay as long as a year.

Our service delivery has changed and evolved over the years to be very unique compared to other shelters. The varying needs of the clients determine the nature and direction of the services they receive. Each woman and child has a unique story and set of circumstances based on his or her personal experiences. All services are very individualized.

Each client receives individual and group counselling. The women are provided with services that address the need for safety, and support with legal, financial, parenting and other issues. In-home support workers teach our clients, on a day-to-day, intensive basis, the specific life skills they require. Follow-up services are provided for clients leaving Discovery House to transition to community living. Counsellors often stay connected with clients for up to one year.

Children are clients too. Even the youngest child who is pre-verbal is treated as a client and is provided with an individual service plan. Counsellor and parent interaction and activities, in addition to art, play and sand therapy, and trauma counselling help children heal and meet milestones typical of other children their age.

Our long-term services focus on building capacity and reducing the impact of violence in our adult and child clients. Through receiving shelter, hope and education women and children can live full and productive lives free of family violence.

# We're Unique

Over the years we have adjusted and added services to keep up with the changing needs of our clients and the diversity in our community. No two people have exactly the same story so we make sure our services match the client. Our services are unique.

We are the only second stage shelter in Alberta:

- To provide what we call 'wrap around' services to each client. That means we provide each adult and child client with services based on the needs they have shared with us. Each client has a different story and varying needs so our services are very individualized.
- To offer hands-on, in-home support to clients living at Discovery House and to those in the community. Women who experience domestic violence are not always able to develop life skills to support independent living, as well as to maintain housing, access community resources, and more. But, we can support women in making the link between "knowing" and "doing" so basic life skills are achieved to the degree that they can provide for themselves and live successfully in the community.
- That has a designated counsellor working with immigrant and refugee women, disadvantaged by domestic violence and war that face barriers placing them at a higher level of risk physically and psychologically. The counsellor advocates for these clients ensuring them equal access to the kinds of services available to other women fleeing violence.
- To have created a developmental checklist that is used with children who have been impacted by domestic violence. We assess their stages of development, determine the gaps, and provide services that help close those gaps and contribute to health and well-being.

# Sharing Our Expertise

Discovery House shares its expertise and best practices in the local, provincial and international community. We were one of only five agencies profiled as a model of excellence at the first World Conference of Women Shelters held last September in Edmonton. It was exciting to network with representatives from 51 nations, sharing best practices and knowledge.

Our director, program and internal operations visited Trinidad twice this year to train the judiciary on the topic of domestic violence and legal barriers confronting abused women. Locally, she is a member of the Family Justice Services Streamlining Project Screening and Assessment Working Group who are working to streamline family court systems.

Discovery House's work with children impacted by domestic violence, particularly young, non-verbal children is cutting-edge. Our child and youth coordinator shared her expertise on using the children's developmental checklist as a clinical tool and the benefits of sand therapy with numerous shelters, social agencies and at conferences, including the Alberta Council of Social Workers and the World Conference.

As a certified clinical site for practicum students completing a Masters of Counselling or varied baccalaureate degrees, we are in demand. Our training and supervision is considered top-notch. Typically we receive far more applications than we can accept – 25 applications for the Masters program and 15 from students completing a bachelors' degree. We accept six students from each program, per year.

Staff has applied their knowledge and expertise to share outcomes and best practices with other organizations and educational institutions. The in-home support program outcomes have been presented by Discovery House staff at the Alliance to End Violence "Brown Bag Luncheon Series". Our manager, community relations taught classes in public relations practices at Mount Royal College and the University of Calgary.

Discovery House appreciates our extremely diverse, well-educated and experienced staff. We know that our expertise helps make us a leader in the sector of domestic violence.



# Collaboration

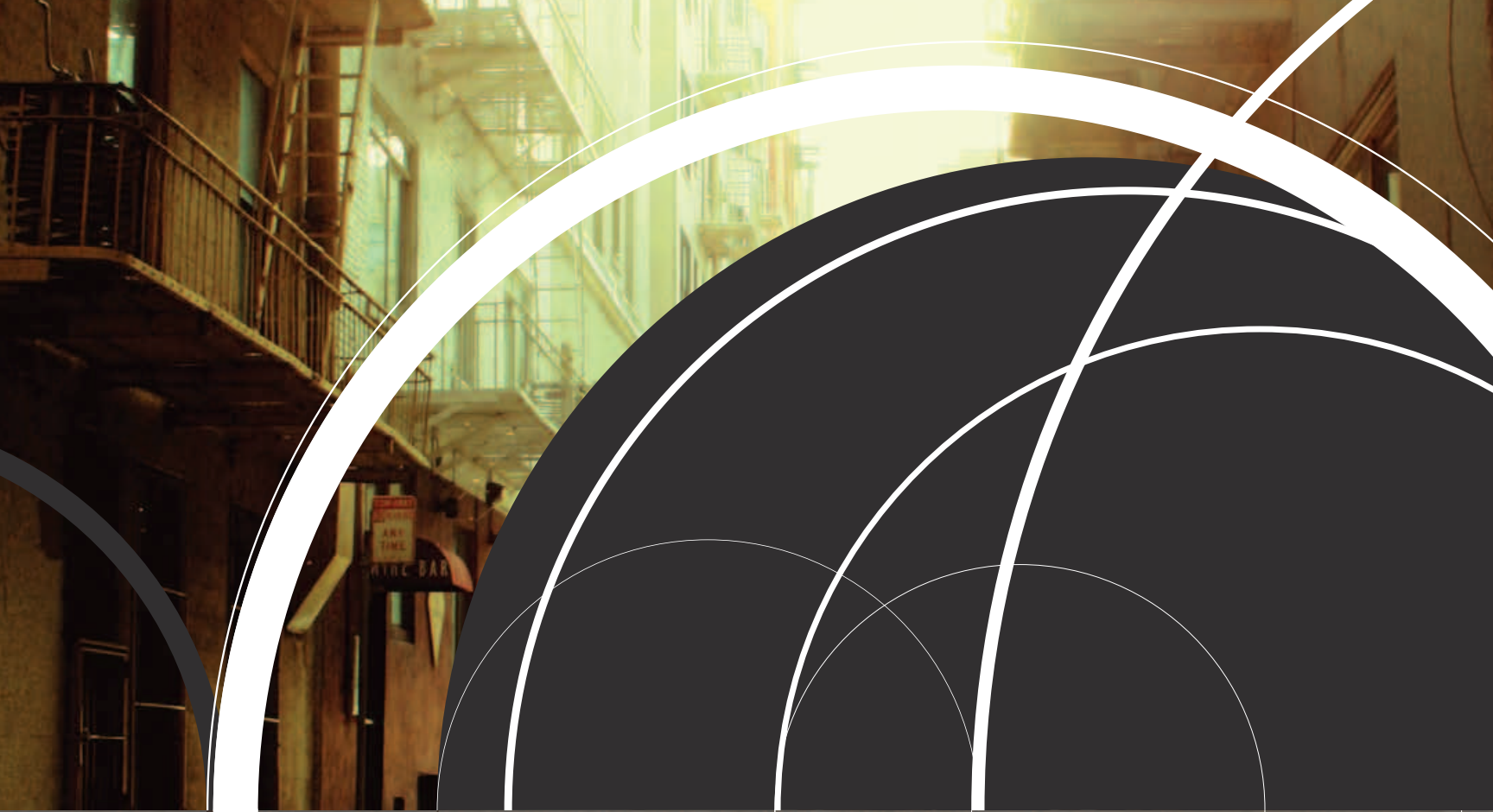
Discovery House, on behalf of the Calgary Woman's Shelter Directors Network, has partnered with the CUPS Rapid Exit Program in a project aimed at ending homelessness for abused women and children - the Family Violence Housing First Project (FVHFP). Women who are leaving shelters are given the opportunity for more permanent and stable housing and appropriate support services through a "Housing First" model of service delivery. That means, let's get people housed and then support them with counselling and other services to help them maintain housing. Clients are

helped to access resources and build supports to decrease the risk for homelessness resulting from violence, poverty or other related issues. This is a new approach in Calgary that will be monitored and evaluated over time to determine the best client fit.


The Rapid Exit team works with landlords in the community to find suitable housing and act as a liaison in support of the families. The team maintains contact with the client and can act as a mediator between client and landlord if necessary.

The FVHFP team at Discovery House includes the project manager, two mental health specialists and three case managers. The team works together to make sure that each client has access to the support and services required to live safely in the community and to work toward a healthier, self-sufficient life. Similar to clients residing at Discovery House, FVHFP clients receive counselling and referrals as needed, help with addressing basic needs, and support with accessing resources in the community. The team is mobile on a daily basis working with families throughout the city.

The goal for the year is to house 50 families. Within the first three months of 2009, the team worked with 19 families.



# In the Community



Educating, engaging, and receiving the support of the community are important for Discovery House. Interacting with individual members of the community, as well as those we meet in groups and through business provides us with the opportunity to attract support with donations and volunteerism.

Fundraising events held throughout the year by community groups ensured financial support but also provided us with the chance to broaden our network and share our stories about the impact of our work in the community. Thanks to the hard work of Cushman & Wakefield LePage's representatives we received \$31,300 from their annual golf tournament. Discovery House supported the Canadian Women's Foundation Shelter from the Storm campaign raising nearly \$80,000 to be distributed to Calgary shelters.

As recipients of the Calgary Herald Christmas Fund in 2008, we received significant media coverage through client's sharing their stories and successes. Stories encourage the readers to support the campaign, contributing this year to record success. Discovery House received \$109,402 from the Calgary Herald Christmas Fund and their generous donors. Congratulations to the Herald on a successful campaign.

Discovery House's annual fundraising event, the Purple Heart Gala featured keynote speaker, Sheldon Kennedy. Nearly 300 guests attended and \$41,900 was raised for our programs. We were honored to present Rediscovering Life & Dreams, a DVD directed and produced by Haworth. It's a wonderful piece that accurately portrays who we are, what we do and why it's so important. Haworth staff provided countless hours to this project and we thank all those who participated.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers for their on-going work with Discovery House. And thanks also to the employee teams we partnered with through three United Way Day of Caring events which resulted in clean, freshly painted hallways, front reception area and a few suites.

Involvement with our community helps us to highlight our work. Discovery House was one of five agencies presented as a model of excellence at the first World Conference of Women's Shelters held in September, 2008 in Edmonton. And we are honored to be considered a preferred agency of the United Way of Calgary and area, Family and Community Social Services (FCSS) and the Burns Memorial Fund.

Discovery House will continue to nurture our relationships, strive to build new partnerships and work with other agencies to engage the community.

# Outcomes and Inspiration

We often are asked questions like, “How many people do you help? How do you know you’re making a difference? Does the help women receive keep them from going back to an abusive situation? Can you really help little kids?”

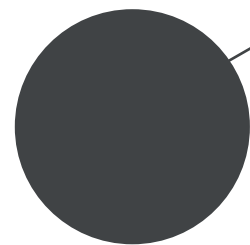
And we are pleased to answer, from what our evaluations tell us – yes, yes, yes, and yes.

In the past year, 53 women and 102 children lived at Discovery House. Of the 53 mothers, 34 per cent were established Canadians, 41 per cent were immigrant or refugees, and 24 per cent were aboriginal. On average a family stayed in residence for five months, however some clients stay for up to one year.

Results of exit surveys showed that 94 per cent of clients indicated that they were not planning on returning to their abusive relationship. Eighty-nine per cent of clients agreed they knew more about community resources they could access to help provide for their families.

Children made significant progress. We helped 92 per cent of children and youth make positive progress in closing developmental gaps. And, a total of 73 per cent of children expressed feeling safe since their admission to Discovery House.

Follow-up services, provided to clients who reside at Discovery House and continuing as clients’ transition to the community, helped 70 women this year. We may not be able to meet the needs of all clients but we know the work we do, in residence and with families in the community does make a difference. Our clients tell us so....



“Before I had my child, I didn’t care about myself. After having my child, I realized that I didn’t want him to see the abuse. I was scared of being independent, and to have to deal with everything on my own. But, I found myself at Discovery House. I discovered who I am and what I need to do. I earned inner confidence and learned that I can do it.”

- Ashley



- Sadia

“After 2 weeks in an emergency shelter, I moved into Discovery House. I started gaining hope. I felt at peace, I knew I was safe. I gained my confidence back and I found my voice again. I was getting all the support and help I could get. My husband used to call me “nobody”; now I know that I am “somebody”. I am in control of my life again, I am worthy. I am focused and goal-oriented. I am proud to say that I have broken the cycle of abuse in my house.”

“My children and I have come a long way leaving those memories of abuse behind. Coming from years of abuse, I thought it was normal. I thought that the way I was treated was actually the right way, the way relationships were supposed to be. I had never seen a healthy relationship in my life.

- Georgina

Coming to Discovery House was the beginning of a scary but healing journey. Each day was a challenge. There were times when I wanted to give up. However I stayed and fought hard because I wanted to give my children a better life. And now we have a better life. Discovery House supported us and kept us safe. It gave us the tools to move on to an independent, healthier life, and to break the cycle of violence.”

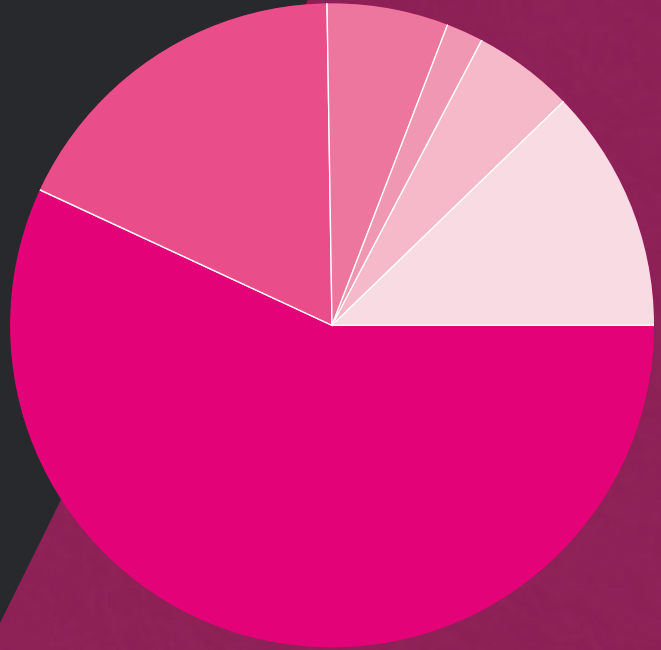
# Financials

Discovery House continues to be in a strong financial position, details of which can be found in our audited financial statements\*. Despite the current economic downturn, core funders, regular and new donors and fundraising activities continue to provide us with strong and stable support.

**INCOME**

56%	Grants	\$ 1, 299,253
18%	Donations	\$ 427,452
6%	Special Events	\$ 147,619
2%	Gaming	\$ 57,312
5%	Rent	\$ 115,815
12%	Other	\$ 267,989

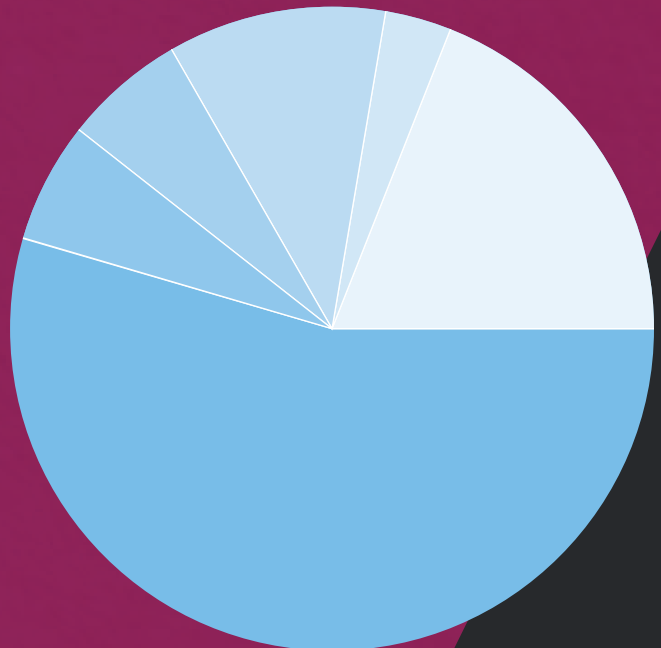
TOTAL . \$ 2,315,440



**EXPENDITURES**

54%	Salaries	\$ 1,181,463
6%	Facility	\$ 130,549
6%	Security	\$ 138,797
11%	Administration	\$ 234,890
3%	Special Events	\$ 73,829
19%	Other	\$ 415,155

TOTAL . \$ 2,174,683



# Donors

## Core Funders

United Way of Calgary & Area • Wild Rose Foundation • City of Calgary, Family and Community Support Services • Alberta Children's Services, Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying • Calgary and Area, Child and Family Services • Calgary Homeless Foundation •

## Donors \$100+

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**Kerilee Snatenchuk** *Director*

**Lori Topp** *Director*

**Gaye Warthe** *Director*

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**Marla Ferg** *Manager, Community Relations*

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**Tony Bosch** *Residential Coordinator*

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**Tamrin Hildebrandt** *Fund Development Leader*

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**Natasha Linteris** *In-home Support Worker*

**Aliya Manji** *Immigrant & Refugee Counsellor*

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**Monica Morrison** *Community Relations Leader*

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**Andrea Taylor** *Child & Youth Counsellor*

**Alisa Tukkimaki** *Residential Counsellor*

**Andréa Vigrass** *Child & Youth Follow-up Counsellor*

# Family Violence Housing First Project

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**Alison Casey** *Case Manager*

**Gail McNeil-Oliver** *Mental Health Specialist*

**Heather Morley** *Project Manager*

**Ethel Stonechild** *Case Manager*

# Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of our organization. They help in all areas of Discovery House, including Board governance, administration, organizing and holding events, program delivery, and facility maintenance. We had 170 volunteers contribute 3184 hours.

We are truly grateful for our volunteers. Thank you for so graciously sharing your time and talent in support of our clients and organization.

# Future

Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society has come a long way in the past 29 years. Programs and services have evolved to ensure we are meeting the needs of the women and children who need our help. Over the years we have seen countless numbers of families move forward in life – from fear to strength, from poverty to security, from isolation to belonging. We are a progressive organization providing innovative programs, individualized services for each client, and education and training for future staff and in the community. We need to continue to be progressive, for our clients and for our community.

We update our services and now we are updating our 'look.' Did you notice our new logo? It is representative of the transition from sorrow to joy that we have observed in women and children who have resided at Discovery House. The teardrop, the house, and the heart demonstrate the transition that occurs for the families from a life of family violence to a safe, happier life in the community.

Though we have made a difference for thousands of families over the years, sadly family violence continues to be a critical issue in our community. Because the need for programs and services is ever-increasing, Discovery House is moving forward with plans to double our capacity in the next five years as outlined in our 2008 – 2012 strategic plan. We are considering options for land and continue to work toward securing funding to build a second "house" in the next five years. Watch for upcoming announcements as we progress in this next phase.

Discovery House will continue to be adaptive, innovative and responsive to community needs. As we move forward we hope you will join us in our mission. We continue to welcome your support.

# HELP

PLEASE DONATE your time or funding  
TO DISCOVERY HOUSE.





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