

Hope Healing & Home



2019 Annual Report



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD **Patricia Hassard**



Board Chair
Patricia Hassard

“We operate the only Emergency Shelter in Ottawa that is dedicated exclusively to homeless women.

It has 61 beds, plus additional cots, and they are always full.”

Patricia Hassard, Board Chair

This is the Annual Report for 2019 and yet, it is almost hard to remember what happened last year because 2020 has seized all of our attention. The Cornerstone team has been working very diligently for weeks with our partners to put in place all of the protocols and routines necessary to deal with COVID-19.

These are extraordinary circumstances where the safety and well-being of our staff and residents is our primary focus. I begin with deep gratitude to our managers and front-line staff who have responded with courage and commitment to the pandemic. Cornerstone is a remarkably strong organization, built on a clear call to support vulnerable women.

To reflect back for a moment on the accomplishments of 2019, Cornerstone provided housing for over 600 women who found themselves homeless. We operate the only Emergency Shelter in Ottawa that is dedicated exclusively to homeless women. It has 61 beds, plus additional cots, and they are always full. The other four Cornerstone Residences provide supportive housing, and they too were fully utilized in 2019.

For Cornerstone 2019 was a year of consolidation. We have a new Executive Director, the indomitable Kia Rainbow. We successfully integrated the Management Board and the Foundation Board into one corporate entity with new governance to support decision-making. We could not operate our programs without the generosity of many. We are grateful for the support from governments, the Anglican Diocese, churches, corporate and individual donors who have faith in Cornerstone.

I volunteer with Cornerstone because I believe wholeheartedly in its mission. We help women to get back on their feet by providing a safe place to live. Having a home is a given for most of us, but for these women, chronic homelessness and instability have become a very difficult way of life.

With the arrival of the pandemic, this year is posing many challenges for Cornerstone. We will do what needs to be done to support our staff and residents to carry on with our mission. Working together, we can create a community where we treat our most vulnerable with dignity and all have a place to call home.

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**603 Women
stayed in our
shelter and
supportive
housing.**

175 amazing
volunteers
helped us
serve women
at-risk.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

A strong and dedicated community of volunteers are at the core of everyday life at Cornerstone.

In 2019, 175 volunteers contributed over 7,000 hours of dedicated service to the many programs offered through our five Cornerstone sites.

“Cornerstone is grateful for the ongoing support of so many volunteers who give their time and generosity of spirit to us every day. Whether you volunteer regularly, or only on occasion, your contribution to the wellbeing of the women of Cornerstone is PRICELESS!”

- Rosemary Jones, Volunteer Coordinator



Left: Elizabeth Reicker recognized for her 20 years of volunteer service.

Right: Directors and members of Cornerstone YPAB at Flora Hall Holiday Mixer 2019.

Young Professional Advisory Board (YPAB)

The Cornerstone Young Professionals Advisory Board (YPAB) is a group of highly dedicated young people working to support our mission.

In the past year, the group has held two successful fundraising events, targeting their peers. These events invited a new generation to contribute to Cornerstone, learn more about the issue of homelessness in our city, and meet like-minded individuals. YPAB events raise funds to provide important resources for residents, such as festive and delicious holiday meals.

YPAB Directors have also held successful public education events at elementary and high schools across the city. Engaging with students in grades four to eleven, the YPAB demystifies homelessness and demonstrates how each of us has a part to play in showing respect and compassion for those experiencing homelessness.

Board of Directors

CHAIR: Patricia Hassard

DIRECTORS:

Arpad (Ari) Abonyi
Barb Belohoubek, RN BScN
Katie Black
Margaret Bloodworth
Marilyn Box
Sanjay Grover
Kara Eusebio
Mark Holzman
Margaret Lemaire
Peter Martin
Wilda Phillips

YPAB

CHAIR: Deirdre Bain

DIRECTORS:

Clarissa Allen, Emma Francis, Alison Thompson, Emily Seabrook, Andrew Higdon, Julie Mouris, Emily Kiar-Goto, Victoria Song, Delan De Silva .

Members: Mario Balerna, Alyssa Harris, Andrew Higdon, Janine Kiefer, Minji Hong, Christine Maika, Valerie Markham, Denise Rollin, Hang Tran, Victoria Wang

A MESSAGE FROM Executive Director Kia Rainbow

Many of you might be aware that our City is in a housing crisis, with many women actually living on the streets. About 1,000 women became homeless this year, and over 600 of them stayed with us at our emergency shelter and/or one of our safe and supportive housing locations. Women come to us struggling with very complex issues. They come to us in crisis and are often trying to rebuild their lives after experiencing years of poverty, trauma and abuse.

Cornerstone Housing for Women makes a difference in the lives of women in Ottawa. We have knowledgeable and skilled staff, a dedicated Board of Directors, and committed volunteers working with us daily. All of us collaborate exceptionally with our funder (the City of Ottawa), partners and the community to meet the needs of very vulnerable women and to end chronic homelessness.

This year, we launch an exciting partnership with Christ Church Bells Corners and the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa. Together, we will provide another 35 beautiful, safe, and affordable housing units for those who are struggling with rising rents and homelessness.

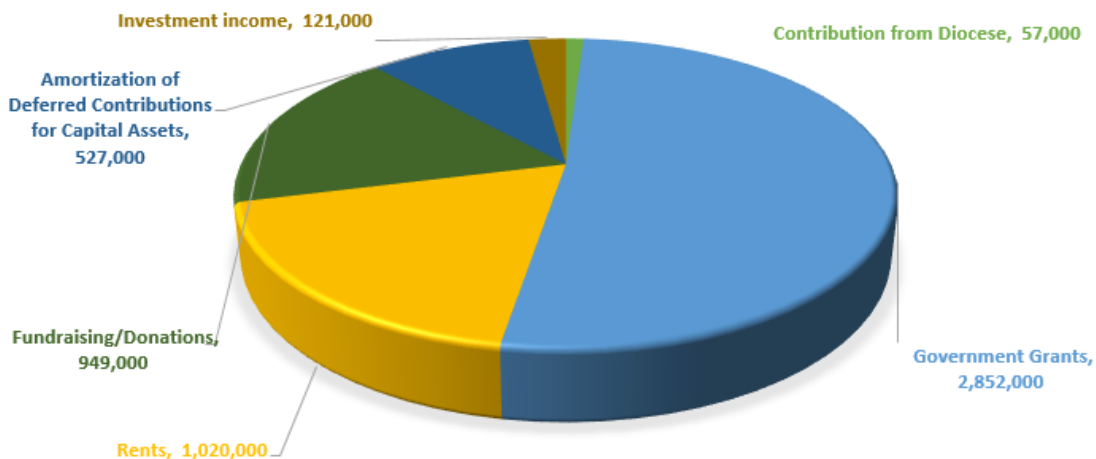
But it is still not enough. Together we can take action. Let's support women to have a safe, permanent place to live. A place that they can afford, where they start to heal and rebuild their lives. Let's provide the right supports for their situation and surround them with a caring community that they can belong to.



Kia Rainbow
Executive Director

“Let’s support women to have a safe, permanent place to live. A place that they can afford, where they start to heal and rebuild their lives.”

Financial Report 2019



2019 Revenue

Cornerstone's revenue sources include government funding received from three levels of Government through the city of Ottawa (52%, or \$2,852,000), rents from the women as they are able to pay (18%, or \$1,020,000) and fundraising (19% or \$949,000).

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP OF OTTAWA **The Rt. Rev. Chapman**



The Right Reverend
Dr. John H. Chapman

Cornerstone Housing for Women is a sacred community. As a Christian and Anglican community, they see the sacred core of each person, whether they embrace Traditional Aboriginal Spirituality, Christianity, Judaism, Hindu, Muslim, or no religious practice or belief whatsoever.

The theology or philosophy we bring to our ministry is a recognition that every human being is a creature of God, divinely loved and embraced. Cornerstone's staff, and volunteers are mindful of this truth, and welcome everyone equally.

Cornerstone is a place of safety. I find that the older I get, and as the vanity of youth fades, I am more mindful than ever how important feeling 'safe' really is. Like most of us, we live in fear of being afraid. Cornerstone is a place where no one needs to live in fear: fear of hunger, fear of being alone, or fear of injustice.

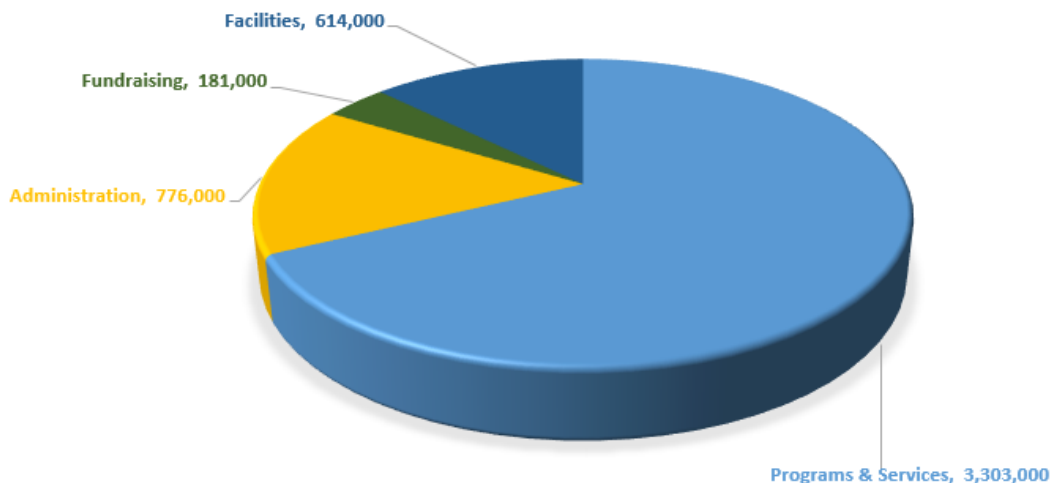
Cornerstone is our safe place for women. It is a holy place and a sacred space and we thank God for it.

And, my deep-felt thanks to Kia and her staff, Board Members, volunteers, and donors who make this incredible ministry possible.

“Generous communities do more than welcome people - they loudly proclaim that we want you to be part of our community. They believe that when we fail to make a home for those without, we are being unfaithful to the God we believe in.” -Bishop Andrew Doyle

2019 Expenses

Direct programs (include counselling, addictions support, activities, programming, and outreach services for women who move from Cornerstone housing to independent living in the community) account for 68% (\$3,303,000) of expenses. Approximately 16% of Cornerstone's expenses are administrative, including staff salaries.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MISSION Ven. Dr. Peter John Hobbs

Cornerstone Housing for Women is a beacon of hope. Women struggling with issues around poverty and homelessness can find immediate support at Cornerstone's Emergency Shelter. At our other locations, Cornerstone also provides safe, affordable, and supportive housing for women who would otherwise be homeless. One of the Community Ministries of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, Cornerstone is part of a close-knit community of agencies that provide services for those most vulnerable in our midst. Sadly, the need for affordable housing, and support services remains an urgent need in the City of Ottawa.

At the time of writing, we as a global community are in the throes of the Covid-19 crisis. Cornerstone has been an exemplar in responding to this pandemic. The staff of Cornerstone have been an inspiration, heroes that come to work each day, providing essential services.

I am so very grateful to Kia Rainbow, our Executive Director, and her incredible team for how they have responded to the Covid-19 crisis. It is a measure of their ongoing commitment to the work entrusted to them.

I am also grateful to all those who give of themselves – their time, skills, and financial contributions – to support the ministry of Cornerstone Housing for Women. Without such support, Cornerstone would not be the grace-filled place that it has become. Together we can ensure that Cornerstone remains a beacon of hope within our community.



Ven. Dr. Peter John Hobbs
Director of Mission

“The goal of my Ministry is to create an environment where women can find their unique selves.”

- Rev. Hilary Murray

SPIRITUAL CARE Reverend Canon Hilary Anne Murray

I'm impressed with the many ways Spiritual Care works in the Emergency Shelter, and four supportive housing residences. We offer prayer circles, communion services, one-to-one spiritual conversations and support, plus fellowship chats over cookies, tea, and pizza parties. The Spiritual Care program impacts the residents positively, thanks to the dedication and work of our volunteers.

Residents may find connection through music, dance, art or language. We offer teachings from varying Christian backgrounds, other religious lineages, and Nature.



Residents living in Cornerstone's supportive community housing.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS : Cornerstone's Outreach Program

"It's important to me to give back to Cornerstone after all the help they gave me

Cornerstone makes a difference.

I love being able to come in each week, it gets me out of the house, and I get to see everyone!"

-Former Resident

The Outreach program provides services and supports to women who previously resided at Cornerstone, but now live independently. At first, living in your own space by yourself is exciting, it's also possible to find it isolating and overwhelming. We offer help so women can transition into their new life of independence and home.

Cornerstone helps women navigate the health care system or connect her to services like subsidized veterinary care for her service dog.

Some women stay connected and volunteer their time and talent. We have participants who help with property management, represent Cornerstone at social functions, or sit on committees as a representative with lived experience. Many thanks to our committed donors. Your support makes the Outreach program possible.



A huge thanks to volunteers like Mitel Canada, and individuals and volunteer groups.

MCPHAIL HOUSE: Supportive Housing Community

McPhail is unique within Cornerstone, as it provides supportive housing to our most independent women: New Canadian and immigrant women that come to us seeking refuge, safe and affordable accommodation while learning to build a new life in an unfamiliar culture - necessarily from scratch. A safe, secure home is a foundation to build on.

Many women had to leave their family and loved ones behind. They find comfort and connection living in a supportive community together.

Sharing stories and food, lively discussions, ranging from politics, to women's roles, and lots of laughter, are what you will find at McPhail House.

One of the highlights for 2019 would be the beautiful transformation of our backyard and gardens with the help of the Mitel volunteer team. The McPhail residents, along with Mitel team, spent the day landscaping, planting and arranging our donated lawn furniture to create an outdoor oasis for the summer. The McPhail women enjoyed many a BBQ, and afternoons on the seat swing.

Melanie Somers,
Outreach and McPhail House Manager

The Women's Emergency Shelter

"The relationships I have been fortunate to build with some of the women over the years are so genuine and our walks are never short of good stories and laughs. The women at Cornerstone's Emergency Shelter also happen to be some of the most caring and inviting individuals - they make it so easy to keep coming back every week!"

-Nicole T. Volunteer

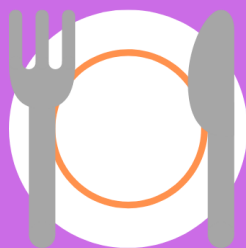
MacLaren Community

MacLaren houses twenty women who were homeless or at-risk of returning to homelessness. Each day, we work in women's homes. We strive to make the supportive housing community as home-like as possible. We foster autonomy, independence, and offer tailored support, as women journey to wellness.

According to CAMH (Centre for Addictions and Mental Health), there are only 10,000 supportive housing units in Ontario. Waitlists can last from one to six years, depending on location. At MacLaren, we support women holistically and lessen the need for emergency services and hospital visits. Women start to recover from the experience of homelessness.

-Nicola Dunn,

We serve **146,000**
nutritious
meals a year.



460 Women
stayed in our
emergency
shelter.



OUR MISSION

CORNERSTONE PROVIDES
EMERGENCY SHELTER
AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
FOR A DIVERSITY OF WOMEN.



OUR SERVICES ARE OFFERED IN AN
ENVIRONMENT WHICH PROMOTES

dignity & A SENSE OF
HOPE.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.



WE STRIVE TO INCREASE
SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND TO END
HOMELESSNESS.



Booth Community

During 2019, Booth St. had a transition of its management team. The team continued to provide high-quality service to the residents. In November 2019, Martine Dore re-joined the Cornerstone team in the role of Senior Manager, having served with the Women's Shelter almost 15 years previously.

As part of the continuum of care that we provide within the health system to high-risk women 55+, this year, we facilitated two residents successfully transitioning to Long Term Care.

Booth Street continues to provide low-barrier housing for women with complex needs. We continue to build capacity in delivering services through a Harm Reduction lens. We do this by having open conversations with residents about how to keep themselves safe if they struggle with problematic substance use. We continue our work, thanks to reliable partners, such as Respect Pharmacy and Ottawa Inner City Community Health Services. We are committed to providing services with dignity, respect and hope to a high-risk population.

- Martine 'Mat' Dore, Sr. Manager

“Now at Booth Street, I am again awed at the resiliency and strength of our residents. I am humbled to be part of a team that provides housing, a true sense of home, and support to vulnerable women in Ottawa.”

- Martine, Sr. Manager, Booth St

Princeton Community

It's been a year since we handed out forty-two keys and welcomed the women to our new Princeton location. Caring staff, volunteers, neighbours, and community support have helped create an environment where women feel safe, comfortable, and valued.

With the stability of having a safe home, women can pursue opportunities that were not possible before. Many at Princeton have accessed the Cornerstone Educational Bursary. We awarded ten grants in 2019, made possible by the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Ian Martin Meaningful Work Fund, and generous donors.

In the last year, Princeton residents made many home-cooked meals.

The weekly Community Kitchen taught safe food handling, preparation skills, and affordable recipe creation.

Bruyere Family Services and The Royal Ottawa have been tremendous supports to the residents by providing primary health and mental health care to the residents.



A resident prepares a nutritious snack in the community kitchen program.

One woman, in particular, benefitted greatly. She told the staff that it was the first time in eight years that she has felt like "herself".

Princeton has been able to celebrate Indigenous culture with the support of Minwaashin Lodge. Twice a week, a cultural worker unites the women through traditional teachings, art, and cooking. The program fosters an understanding of Indigenous culture. It provides a safe space for Indigenous women to celebrate their heritage.

We are looking forward to seeing the Princeton community grow as we enter our full second year.

-Terri-Lynn George, Manager

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

Businesses & Corporate Partners

Acuity Research Group Inc.
 AFP Greater Toronto Chapter
 allsaints event space
 Bank of Montreal
 Barry J Hobin & Associates
 Bayer Crop Science
 BCO Group Inc.
 Beauty on Bank
 BioResource
 Borden Ladner Gervais LLP
 Broder Electric
 Bumble Canada
 Carlyle Design Associates Limited
 Christine Crossman Consulting and Hightide Coaching
 CIBC
 CSG Security Consulting Inc.
 David's Tea Rideau Centre
 Diva International Inc.
 Dental Gurus Inc.
 DNA Cuo
 Eagle Professional Resources
 Edelman Canada
 Egg Farmers of Canada
 Elevate Yoga
 Emond-Harnden LLP
 Enercare Inc.
 Engel & Völkers Ottawa Central
 Fire and Flower York Street
 First National Financial LP
 Fratelli Westboro
 Gap Inc.
 Westboro Village Business Improvement Area
 GEM Health Care Services Inc.
 Giant Tiger Stores Limited
 Glenview Property Management
 Greenbelt Family Health Team
 Holiday Inn Ottawa East
 James B. Lennox & Associates Inc.
 JaniKing of Ottawa
 Jet Black Hair & Studio
 JJ Szabo International
 Kinaxis
 Kwan Chan Medicine Professional Corporation
 Laidlaw Corporate Coaching

Livingston MacDonald Wealth Management
 Loblaw's Isabella Street
 Long & McQuade Ottawa
 Low Murchison Radnoff LLP
 Mann Lawyers LLP
 Mary Kay
 McDonald Brothers Construction Inc.
 Meshwerk Consulting Inc.
 Myers Barrhaven Hyundai
 Neptunes Music Workshops
 PMA Realty Consulting Ltd.
 Promaxis Systems Inc.
 Raymond James
 RBC Dominion Securities Inc. Ottawa Preston
 RBC Westboro
 RE/MAX Hallmark Realty Ltd. Brokerage
 Rescom Property Management
 Climec Residential Inc.
 Climec Residential Inc.
 Ring Electric Inc.
 Royal LePage Team Realty Inc.
 Savvy Company
 Seabrook Bros. Mechanical Ltd.
 Shade Nyx's Theatre Macabre
 Sheridan-Woods Medicine Professional Corp.
 Shopbrain
 Short and Suite BNB
 Sox Box Campaign
 Strathmere Farm Inc.
 TD Bank - Klondike Road
 TD Bank - South Keys
 TD Bank - Rideau Team
 TD Bank - Billings Bridge Branch
 Telus
 Ten Thousand Villages
 TFO Canada
 The Bytown School of Singing
 RE/MAX Hallmark Realty Ltd. Brokerage
 The Hintonburg Public House
 The Mortgage Source
 Third World Bazaar
 Three Wild Women Inc.
 Fire and Flower York Street
 Thyme & Again Creative Catering
 Tweed & Hickory
 Uniform Urban Developments
 Urbandale Corporation
 Valley Squire Furniture
 Villanova Dental Studio
 With Love Bridal Boutique Ltd

Faith Groups & Communities

Admiration of the Lord , Mamsi Corale Prayer group
 All Saints Westboro Anglican Church
 Altar Guild of the Anglican Diocese Ottawa
 Bromley Road Baptist Church
 Cedarview Alliance Church
 Chapel of Grace
 Chin Baptist Church
 Chinese Christian Church of Ottawa
 Christ Church Ashton
 Christ Church Bells Corners
 Christ Church Bells Corners
 Chinese Christian Church of Ottawa
 Christ Church Ashton
 Church of St. Barnabas, Apostle & Martyr
 Church of the Ascension, Ottawa
 Church Of The Good Shepherd and Holy Trinity Church
 Dominion Chalmers United Church Women
 Fourth Avenue Baptist Church
 Good Shepherd Anglican Lutheran Ministry
 Good Shepherd Parish CWL
 Grace City Church
 Holy Redeemer Parish
 Julian of Norwich Anglican Church
 Kanata Baptist Church
 Khaled Centre
 Knox Presbyterian Church
 Ladies of Fatima
 Osgoode Baptist Womens Mission Society
 Ottawa Chinese Alliance Church
 Ottawa Muslim Women's Organization
 Our Lady of Fatima Church
 Our Lady of the Visitation Church
 Palmtree Ministries Inc
 Parish of Huntley
 Parkdale United Church
 Queen of the Most Holy Rosary

Foundations

 Benefaction Foundation
 C3S Care Foundation
 Canada Gives
 Columbus Club-Council 485 Charitable Foundation
 Ottawa Community Foundation
 R. A. Beamish Foundation
 Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
 The Anglican Foundation of Canada
 Meaningful Work Foundation
 The Sahara Foundation
 The Lillian & Leroy Page Foundation
 The Walter and Friedl Stenger Foundation

R.C.C.G. Chapel of Grace
Rothwell United Church
Saint Louis Marie de Monfort Church
St. Andrew's Group
St. Anthony Children Centre
St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church
St. Basil's Catholic Women's League
St. Faustina Parish
St. Helen's Anglican Church
St. James Anglican Church
St. James Anglican Church, Franktown
St. John's Anglican Church, Parish of March
St. Martin de Porres Catholic CWL
St. Mary Magdalene Anglican Church
St. Matthew's Anglican Church
St. Maurice Church
St. Patrik's Fallowfiels CWL
St. Paul's Anglican Church, Hazeldean-Kanata
St. Thomas Anglican Church A.C.W.
St. Thomas Anglican Church, Woodlawn
St. Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church
The Church of St Mary the Virgin
The Church of St Mary the Virgin
The Church of St. John the Evangelist
West Village Church
Woodroffe United Church
Woodroffe United Church Women

Service Clubs, Groups & Schools

12th. Ottawa Girl Guides
63rd. Nepean Girl Guides
Algonquin College of Applied Arts & Technology
Alpha Master Chapter Beta Sigma Phi
Aquanuts
Armenian Relief Society (Ottawa Chapter)
Ashbury College
Assoc. of Prof. Executives of the Public Service
Bent Over Pages Book Club
Berrigan Elementary School
Better Half Notes
Brookfield High School
Buy Nothing Group
Bytown Beat
Canada Revenue Agency
Canterbury High School
Capital City Garrison of the 501st Legion
Carleton Condominium Corporation 21
Central Valley Opportunity Center La Roche
Ces Cyed Outreach
Churchill Alternative School
City View Curling Club
Climate Change and Innovation Bureau
Common Thread Quilt Guild

Cornerstone Young Professionals Advisory Board
Cuso International
Delta Phi Epsilon Carleton
Devonshire Public School
Dovercourt Recreation Association
EORLA - Pre and Post Laboratory Staff at TOH
Frayed Knots Quilters, Orleans
Friends of One Vision
Frog Band
Gals that Brunch Ottawa
Gamma Phi Beta - Ottawa/Gatineau Alumnae Chapter
Girl Guides (1st. Navan Guides)
Girl Guides (Ingleside)
Health Canada
Highland Book Club
Home and Community Care Managers
Humanitarian Volunteer Network
Huntley Curling Club
Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Information Systems and Management Consultants
Injury Prevention Plus
Ottawa Inner City Health
Ionic Lodge Westboro Masonic Temple #526
Jackson Trails Early Learning Centre
Joint Learning Program
Kanata Quilt Guild
Langar for Hungar
Laureate Lambda
Lisgar Collegiate Insitute
Mindware Academy School
Mother Theresa Secondary School
MotherWit Doula Care Ottawa

Nursing and Administration staff of Ottawa Endoscopy and Day
Nutrition International
Optimist Club of Nepean Inc.
Ottawa Home Economics Association
Ottawa Newcomers' Alumnae Club
Ottawa Police Service
Ottawa Region Masonry Contractors Association
Ottawa Technical Secondary School
Ottawa Women Dentists Study Club
Ottawa Women's Canadian Club
Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre
Privy Council Office (Legal Services sector)
Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada
PSC- RWC and Local 70059
RA Curling Club
RA Duplicate Bridge Club
RCMP Ladies Curling Club
ROHR Chabad Students Network of Ottawa
Rotaract Club of Ottawa South

Neptunes Music Workshops
Rotary Club of West Ottawa
Shriners Churchill Avenue
Somerset West Community Health Centre
The Kings Daughters and Sons, Vista Circle
The Period Purse Ottawa
The Royal Canadian Regiment Association
The Stairwell Carollers
Tourism Industry Association of Canada
Trade Facilitation Office Ottawa
University of Ottawa -
Telfer School of Management
Vimy Ridge Public School
Vineyard Vixens
Warm Wishes Gifts
Weigh-In Ladies
Westboro Region Food Bank
Westboro Village BIA
Women and Gender Equality
Women Helping Women Purse Project
Women in Land Development
Women on Skis
Womxn(EM)power
YOU.ITV
YourCause
Zonta Club of Ottawa

***We deeply
appreciate the
support of all of
the individuals,
families,
businesses,
foundations,
faith, and
community groups,
that stand behind
us, and support us,
so we can serve
vulnerable women
in our community,
as they transform
their lives after
homelessness.***

A Lament of a Homeless Woman: A Women's Emergency Shelter Client's Perspective

All Canadians should be concerned about the lack of affordable housing since most Canadians are one paycheque or an illness away from being homeless like me. I am currently staying at Cornerstone which is an emergency shelter for women only. It is a good shelter. The case workers are supportive and a good source of information to find the supports in the community that we need. They have comforting words when we are dispirited and even act as referees when 60+ women are jammed in the shelter during inclement weather and we get on each other's nerves. The cleaning staff are always friendly and cheerful even when the sanitizer breaks down and our tracking in snow adds to their workload. The cooks work hard to provide tasty and nutritious meals on a daily basis. But it is not home. The women who are staying at the Cornerstone shelter are as diverse as are the reasons for them being there. There are educated women, women who are currently working, women who are new to this country. Women who have learning disabilities, and women who suffer from addiction and mental illnesses. These women have become homeless because of landlord disputes, domestic or other kinds of abuse, cannot afford market housing on their salaries, or because of addiction and illness. I used to have a career, a house and a family but because of mental illness, I am homeless for the first time in my life. It has been a real eye opener for me. I always tried to give change to homeless people but now I have joined their ranks. The worst part of being in shelter for me is the lack of privacy. I share a room with another woman, and although she is pleasant enough, I long for time alone. I am an introvert. How I long for the privacy of my own apartment. There are 40,000 people like me using emergency shelters every night across Canada and it is only getting worse. Every day Cornerstone gets calls from women looking for shelter and, sadly, often the response is "Sorry, we're full". Sometimes we have women sleeping in the dining room at night just to have a roof over their heads. I have been at Cornerstone for over 5 months, and am lucky to be there, but my social worker tells me that it could be another year and a half before I get an apartment: the need is so great. I wish the government would make affordable housing a real priority since I cannot afford market rent on my ODSP benefits. In the meantime, I try and get by day by day and wait for my turn for an affordable and safe apartment. And privacy.

Cornerstone Housing For Women

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Web: www.cornerstonewomen.ca **Charitable Registration Number:** 83725-8854-RR0001

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Facebook @CornerstoneHousing
Twitter @hopecornerstone