

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

COMPASSION
EXCELLENCE
ACCOUNTABILITY

EQUITY
AND
INCLUSION



Elizabeth Fry
toronto
Hope. Strength. Justice.



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Board President Shabnum Durrani and Executive Director Kelly Potvin



Shabnum Durrani
Board President



Kelly Potvin
Executive Director

Over the course of this past year, we've all seen our daily lives shaped by the growing global pandemic and ongoing lockdown safety measures. We've weathered so much loss and tragedy in relation to COVID-19, that it feels especially grateful to be ending this year on a more positive note with vaccines bringing new hope and promise.

As an essential service, Elizabeth Fry Toronto has remained open throughout the pandemic, and we've been nimble to adapt to continue to meet clients' needs. The pandemic gave us the opportunity to showcase our organization's values of compassion, equity and inclusion, excellence and accountability. While we needed to change how some programs were delivered and pause others, we've continued to deliver high quality services dedicated to supporting the women we serve every day.

This year the Board of Directors has taken on a new exciting direction, by voting to include spaces for women with lived experiences of the criminal justice system within the Board's structure. This bold move is in alignment with our values, and gives women with lived experiences a true voice at the highest level of our organization.

We've also launched a new project this year with our mobile outreach van, in collaboration with Prisoners HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy (OAHAS), and Thunder Women Healing Lodge Society. Our van makes it easier for us to serve multiple neighborhoods throughout Toronto and Scarborough, by safely meeting clients where they are at to access necessary services and supports during COVID-19. This program is led by a team of Peer Harm Reduction Outreach Workers, who are supporting BIPOC community members with referrals to clinics, agencies and other social services, and distributing information, harm reduction supplies, grocery cards and personal care items.

We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the devastating discoveries of the bodies of Indigenous children who were victims of the residential school system in Canada. The horror of Canada's residential school system is another reminder of the legacy of colonization that continues today with disproportionate incarceration rates among Indigenous populations, especially for Indigenous women. These discoveries need to serve as a rallying cry for us all to examine our broken justice system and consider alternative responses to social harm through prison abolition.

Through all the changes and challenges 2020 brought, the successes we've shared were made possible by our dedicated staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to carry out our vision and mission. We are thankful for the resilience and perseverance they've shown to ensure Elizabeth Fry Toronto continues to make a difference in the lives of women across Toronto. We celebrate and find inspiration from the women who access our programs and services, and are grateful for the commitment and support of our partner organizations, funders, donors, and allies.

Elizabeth Fry Toronto is working with various levels of government on an exciting new project...stayed tuned in the coming months for our announcement!

ABOUT US

Elizabeth Fry Toronto is a charitable organization with nearly 70 years of experience as Toronto's only agency focused on meeting the needs of women in conflict with the law. Our programs assist women from court, prison, and within the community, helping to keep families together and increase the chance for marginalized women to break free from or avoid the cycle of incarceration, poverty and homelessness. Many of the women we serve struggle with trauma, mental health and substance use challenges, unemployment, racial discrimination, single motherhood, and lack of family support. Our incredible and dedicated team of staff, volunteers and students provide supportive services, community-based programming, and transitional housing and supports for clients, helping to equip them with the skills, supports, and resources they need to create meaningful change in their lives. We also simultaneously advocate for alternatives to the criminal justice system and work to educate the public about the challenging realities of criminalized women.





NEW MISSION, VISION, VALUES

MISSION:

Elizabeth Fry Toronto delivers gender based, trauma informed services and advocates for justice and equity for women and non-binary people who are criminalized and their families

VISION:

We envision communities where women are not criminalized

VALUES:

- **Compassion:** We honour women's voices, experiences and resilience and prioritize women's mental, spiritual, physical and emotional health
- **Equity and Inclusion:** We are a feminist organization and we challenge oppression in all its forms
- **Excellence:** We foster a collaborative culture based on self-reflection, continuous learning, effective partnerships, quality improvement and evidence based practice
- **Accountability:** We are responsible to ourselves and to our stakeholders for using resources appropriately, communicating honestly and acting with integrity

Healing from Abuse and Trauma

The Healing from Abuse Program works with women who have experienced childhood and/or adult physical and emotional abuse resulting in trauma. This program helps clients identify abusive relationships, and develop skills to establish personal safety and manage traumatic stress responses.

This year our Healing from Abuse program served 75 women.

Testimonial: *"You saved my life. You were there for me on a Friday night and you gave me strength to carry on. You gave me good advice, the mother I had never had. You saved me, you stood up for me. You are a hero and I will love you forever. Without you I wouldn't be here. That's the truth."*

Mothers Who Care

The parenting program provides one-on-one and group counselling to mothers or caregivers at risk or in conflict with the law. The program also provides services to mothers who are currently incarcerated.

This year our Mothers Who Care program served 74 women.

Success story: *A woman was incarcerated, served her sentence and released into the community. She was able to reunite with her child and regained custody. She pursued a training program, and has since gained employment.*

Reintegration

The Reintegration program provides counselling for women on provincial probation and parole. Using a harm reduction framework, clients are provided with the skills and resources necessary to develop alternatives to theft, fraud, substance use behaviours, and poor decision-making.

This year our Reintegration program served 83 women.

This year we collaborated on one outreach workshop with Chigamik Community Health Centre to engage Indigenous women on the topic of Anger Management.

Highlight: *In October 2020 we launched two workbooks for clients struggling to meet counselling conditions for Anger Management and Theft & Fraud.*



COVID-19 Update:

We provided substantial case management support in 2020 due to the increased need of the pandemic, and re-created content for Substance Use & Trauma, Anger Management, and Theft & Fraud groups to make them more suitable for a virtual format. The majority of clients benefitted from telephone sessions which assisted many with work-life balance as they no longer needed to commute to workplaces, and could multitask where appropriate.



Community General Counselling

The Community General Program provides counselling to women dealing with a broad range of social, economic and justice disadvantages. Some sessions focus on substance use and addictions, anger management, theft and fraud, as well as social and criminal justice issues.

This year our Community General Counselling program served 81 women.

Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM)

TREM is an evidenced-based intervention program that helps women who have complex trauma histories, linking their trauma to current behaviours and emotional responses. The program is comprised of 25 sessions focusing on empowerment, trauma experiences/impact, and skills building. Clients of TREM also receive individual counselling and resource support as needed during their enrolment in the program. TREM involves psychoeducation and skill training to address both short-term and long-term consequences of trauma.

This year our TREM program served 38 women.

Highlight: *TREM was supported by 2 peer volunteers who successfully completed a previous cycle of the program.*

Newcomer Liaison

The Newcomer Liaison Program provides psychoeducational workshops that focus on education and prevention to newcomer women. This program addresses the needs of newcomer women who are at risk of becoming in conflict with the law due to their lack of knowledge and/or orientation to the Canadian justice system.

This year our Newcomer Liaison program served 46 women.

Exit Doors Here

The Exit Doors Here (EDH) program provides personalized wraparound services and interventions for women wishing to exit the sex work industry. EDH uses a Critical Time Intervention (CTI) model which aims to transition people from precarious and sensitive situations to stability, following a harm reduction and trauma informed framework. The program's approach is to provide support to those who have made this decision for themselves, and we empower women to set their own goals for their future.

This year our Exit Doors Here program served 37 new clients and 30 returning clients, completed 20 intakes and housed 8 women.

Highlight: *Exit Doors Here hired a new peer volunteer who was a successful graduate of the Exit Doors Here program. She is engaged with clients by conducting check-ins and debriefing with clients as needed.*

COVID-19 Update:

With social distancing and COVID-19 restrictions in effect, outreach no longer looks the same. Women are more confined, resulting in outreach numbers being at an all-time low. The social restrictions and closed public spaces bring concerns for women who have to reside in abusive homes. Most women that have participated in the EDH program have financial difficulties and rely on drop-in programs, food banks, and other means to survive. The EDH objective is to assist clients with transitioning out of the sex industry safely. Currently outreach at various locations and hot spots throughout the GTA such as Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) residential buildings, health clinics, shelters, drop-ins, motels, street, food banks, and Ontario Court of Justice are no longer feasible. We are now currently relying on internal and external referrals, our agency website for intake, and by phone.



Phyllis Haslam Residence

Phyllis Haslam Residence is a transitional residence for women paroled from federal and provincial correctional institutions. Women work towards community reintegration in a supportive and structured environment.

This year our Phyllis Haslam Residence housed 46 women.

Testimonial: *"Efray taught me everyone can change, even me."*

COVID-19 Update:

Living in a congregate setting during COVID-19 was tricky, but the resilience demonstrated by the women and staff working together kept everyone safe without any outbreaks. The women followed their reintegration plan as best they could, despite many barriers. Many transitioned back into the community by either going back to their family home or moving into their own apartment. One of the biggest obstacles faced was securing employment, only to be let go due to the pandemic. Several of the women were such good employees that they were rehired once restrictions eased up. Attending programs such as Anger Management, AA or NA meetings, or Trauma Counselling was a challenge. Thank goodness for Zoom and the purchase of laptops and wifi for the women to use!

Home for Good

Home for Good is a partnership between Elizabeth Fry Toronto and the City of Toronto aimed at providing safe and stable housing for women transitioning out of institutions. Through this project, we are able to assist high needs clients in navigating the private rental market, and support them through the process of community reintegration.

This year our Home for Good program housed 4 new clients successfully and assisted 15 clients with their housing search.

Testimonial: *"I wouldn't have been able to find and secure RGI housing in Toronto without the help of Elizabeth Fry Toronto. I had some hiccups on my move-in day and EFry staff stepped in to save the day. Even after moving, staff at EFry have been great ongoing supports and I know I can reach out if I need help."*

Testimonial: *"I am happy to say that I was so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the housing program. Nilani was very informative and helpful throughout the whole process and it really has been a relief with my reintegration."*

COVID-19 Update:

Helping clients navigate housing searches through the COVID-19 pandemic has been nothing short of difficult. Regardless of these challenges, clients have been resilient and resourceful in viewing and securing their units with in-person support from our Housing Worker. During this period Elizabeth Fry Toronto became a partner agency with the YWCA on their 389 Church St project, which was completed late January 2020, and by year-end an additional 3 clients were housed with more to come. The clients we have worked with and continue to work with are exiting institutions into homeless situations, so obtaining housing is a success story for any and all of them.

Building Employment Strategies Together (BEST)

The BEST program was developed to give participants the opportunity to develop skills and strategic ways to reintegrate in their community through employment and educational initiatives.

This year our BEST program served 67 women and supported 30 women with Record Suspensions through making applications for summary, indictable and non-conviction offences.

COVID-19 Update:

The BEST Program endured major challenges as with many programs at E Fry Toronto, due to the pandemic. We were not able to make our weekly visits to the Vanier Centre for Women to provide women within the institution with pre-employment, life skills and Record Suspension support. We are glad that our community clients continue to benefit from the BEST program.

My Start-Up

My Start-Up is a trauma-informed entrepreneurship program in partnership with Rise Asset Development designed for women and non-binary people to develop their business ideas, gain self-confidence, increase their employment and life skills, create meaningful connections and, for some, launch a successful small business. It is comprised of two phases: the preparatory phase, where participants attend workshops that cover topics such as professional communication, budgeting, bookkeeping, and self-care; and phase two which involves university-level small business training lead by Rise. After graduation, alumni are invited to join the post-program supports, which include monthly Chill and Chat sessions and Guest Speaker sessions for continued networking and mentorship support..

This year My Start-Up facilitated 36 outreach events, 24 post-program support workshops, 40 phase 1 workshops and 40 phase 2 workshops. We are thrilled to have supported 35 participants through the process.

Success stories: Business owner Rebecca, MSU grad (cohort 4)

"The Family Civility Institute began its operations in May of 2020. Prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the founder and CEO of The Family Civility Institute, Dr. Rebecca Finlason-Harper, was pursuing her Social Services Worker diploma at Seneca College. Rebecca began The Family Civility Institute, which offers psycho-social family intervention training to community workers who deliver services to vulnerable populations who experienced oppression, marginalization, addiction and mental health issues, trauma, etc. One of the major focuses of training is community capacity building and sustainability. Despite the challenges that were brought on by the pandemic, The Family Civility Institute has had a major growth opportunity in 2020. Rebecca was able to implement free 6-week training workshops to social service workers in Kenya. This project was implemented on advice she received from a mentor who was delivering one of the My Start-Up workshops. As a direct consequence of the 6-week training in Kenya, Rebecca has overwhelmingly positive feedback from The Family Civility Institute trainees that she can use in her proof of concept and marketing. The Family Civility Institute is currently in the process of securing a project with the Jamaican government, which would entail training of approximately 100 social development workers in Jamaica. Conversations about this agency contract are actively underway. In just under one year of operation, Rebecca's non-profit organization has positively impacted the lives of many people, both trainees and their clients alike."

Direct Accountability

Direct Accountability Program (DAP) is an alternative to prosecution for eligible individuals who have been charged with minor criminal offences. The program allows for the efficient resolution of minor court matters, and recognizes that community-based sanctions are an effective way to hold individuals accountable for minor offences without criminal conviction. It results in the charge(s) being withdrawn – with no criminal conviction.

This year our DAP served 212 men and 95 women.

Success stories: *A woman was asked to complete community service as a method to amend for her criminal charge. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the amount of volunteer opportunities available, it was arranged she would collect garbage around her neighborhood and provide visual evidence to the Community Justice Worker. She was able to clean up her neighbourhood and get outside during the pandemic and has had her charge withdrawn. While speaking about her diversion, she asked questions about starting her own business and she is now enrolled in our My Start-Up program. A win all around!*

Partner Assault Response (PAR)

The Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program delivers specialized, court-mandated psycho-educational intervention for women who have been charged within domestic violence situations. Over 12 weeks, clients are given the opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes regarding domestic violence, and gain a better understanding of various topics ranging from healthy parenting and effective communication, to financial abuse. Clients are encouraged to contribute to the discussion and reflect on the circumstances which brought them to the program.

This year our PAR program facilitated 7 groups and served 60 women.

Highlight: *Throughout COVID-19, PAR staff developed the safety planning handbook for clients experiencing challenges with intimate partner violence. We worked on a one-to-one basis to accommodate our clients' needs (related to safety concerns, technology accessibility, literacy and language barriers) and ran multiple, smaller virtual PAR groups. PAR staff also connected with clients on an ongoing basis, outside of the weekly sessions, to provide additional support related to COVID-19 challenges, including isolation, anxiety, and issues with accessing virtual services in the city. We have exercised flexibility and understanding to help clients succeed in this program and reach their full potential.*



Talk & Listen

Getting access to information and resources while in prison is challenging - our Talk & Listen volunteers are here to help. We work with callers as they navigate the criminal justice system by offering information and resources related to legal information, housing, mental health services, reintegration, release planning, and more.

This year our Talk and Listen line received 642 calls, supported by 14 volunteers.

Community Outreach Van

In collaboration with Prisoners HIV/AIDS Support Action Network (PASAN), Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy (OAHAS), and Thunder Women Healing Lodge Society (TWHLS) we launched our mobile outreach van on February 1, 2021. Our van helps address some of the barriers that make it difficult for community members to access necessary services and supports during COVID-19. Led by supervisor Dana Riley, our team of Peer Harm Reduction Outreach Workers provide support to BIPOC community members with referrals to clinics, agencies and other social services. They distribute brochures and information, harm reduction supplies, grocery cards, and personal care items.

In just a short 2 month period we served over 300 women.

The Market Place

The Market Place is a free clothing and personal care 'store' located at our main office, that is open to marginalized women and non-binary individuals.

COVID-19 Update:

During COVID-19 when restrictions lifted slightly we were able to offer pick-up packages for women looking for clothing and personal care items. Women were able to fill out a form online and identify what items they needed the most.

We would like to extend a big thank you to our committed volunteers who quickly adapted when the pandemic hit to provide services to the women we serve remotely on our Talk and Listen Line. We also want to thank all the volunteers that continued to check-in throughout the year to see how they could help and support our clients in other capacities.



We want to thank our Board of Directors, staff, students, volunteers and peer leaders for their adaptability, hard work, and commitment to our clients while we navigated COVID-19. Without their passion and dedication to our mission and vision Elizabeth Fry Toronto's programs and services would not have been operational without them.

Board Members

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Venus Syed (President - stepped down in March)
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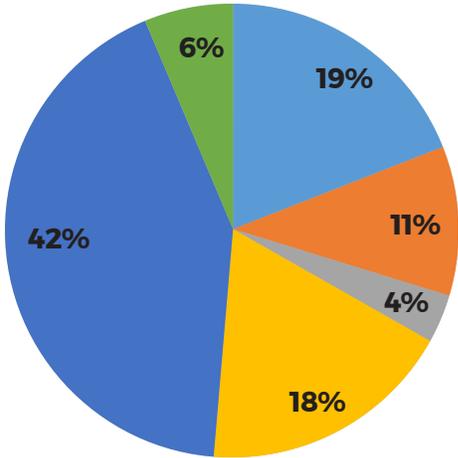
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Ananya Dhoundiyal, Hanya Curumthaully

FINANCIAL REPORT

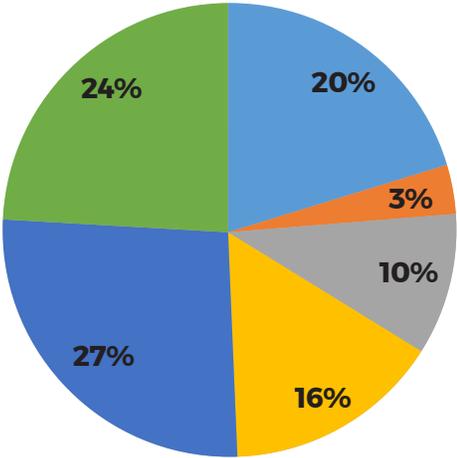
REVENUES



- United Way
- City of Toronto
- Donations and Foundations Grants
- Provincial Government
- Federal Government
- Other

Total Revenues: \$3,545,166

EXPENSES



- Outreach Programs
- Fundraising
- Administration & Resource Development
- Employment
- Counselling & Court Programs
- Residence

Total Expenses: \$3,499,822

On behalf of Elizabeth Fry Toronto and our clients, we would like to extend a big **thank you** to our generous individual donors and members who have supported us over the year. We appreciate the financial support, time and resources our funders and supporters have provided to ensure we can continue to serve women in conflict with the law. Without this support we would be unable to carry out our work in the community and at large.

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Cover artwork by
Kyra Kaushal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyra Kaushal".