



2020

# ANNUAL REPORT

*our impact in our community*



**counselling. education. advocacy.**



[info@stopabuse.ca](mailto:info@stopabuse.ca)



780.460.2195

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Cheryl Pollard is the Associate Dean in the Faculty of Nursing @ MacEwan University. A long time St Albert resident, Dr. Pollard has served on the SAIF Board for almost a decade and almost 5 years as its President.*

In March 2020, our lives were changed when we experienced our first public health restrictions aimed at abating COVID-19.

Stop Abuse in Families responded by implementing strict health measures aimed at stopping the spread of this virus. During this last year we witnessed many changes in how we relate to one another. We were able to provide many of our services virtually; however, there were clients who did not have the resources or the means to attend virtual appointments. For those individuals and families, our doors remained open. In fact, the demands for the services SAIF offers increased.

**“The professionalism and dedication of our staff & volunteers have been beacons of inspiration.”**

...as we navigate the complexities of building and maintaining healthy relationships living within a pandemic.

Although we were not able to engage with our communities in the ways we had done in the past, such as hosting our annual gala, our donors remained committed to supporting our work in promoting healthy and respectful relationships through education, advocacy and support. For this we are very thankful.

We are also very grateful to the financial support provided by all levels of governments, as these funds have been critical to the sustainability of SAIF. We have been able to continue to provide services to those who have experienced, and/or witnessed, abuse in their lives.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES

Just as we were looking forward to piloting new programs after having stabilized core services, Covid-19 hit us at the end of the first quarter. Thanks to our dedicated staff, we quickly shifted gears to address immediate needs, to change delivery models in order to meet with lockdown measures without halting services, and moved our capacity mostly to tele-health and virtual options to meet the ever increasing volume of calls and requests for support.

**“ While Covid-19 has been challenging, we adapted to provide services to those who needed us most. ”**

By summer, we re-opened to all in person services, (including moving to a new location!) albeit with a litany of Covid-19 protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of both staff and clients. We simply couldn't ignore the needs of clients who weren't able to find safe places in their home to receive online or telephone support services. So many expressed the need to come in, to see staff, to receive services in person. Addressing the safety, security, and mental well being needs of families who were isolated or closed off from other supports including friends and family, schools, social gathering spaces, etc. was a priority for us.

Of course, we worried about how we'd fund our work when our community fundraisers, our gala, and so many community donors were facing financial hardships themselves.

**“ But, I think in St Albert, we find a way. ”**



We applied for every federal relief program we were eligible for and that helped. We put the call out to the community, and they came up with creative solutions like neighbourhood driveway Easter bunnies, wine fairies and more. We sold purple masks and made the most of our social media. The City of St Albert came through with emergency funding. And instead of a Red Shoe Gala in November, we launched a 2 month year end campaign that raised more than enough to make up for the shortfall of not having a gala.

**“ For me, seeing the St Albert spirit alive & well despite all the challenges of 2020, is immensely gratifying. ”**

Without the community outpouring of support & generosity throughout the entire year, we would have struggled to serve all those who reached out to us in 2020. But because of you, we found a way to help where and when we could in a timely way; in a way that people needed; in the best way we could. I can't thank you enough for all you do for us and for all our families dealing with the impacts of violence & abuse in our communities.

*Averi Kelleppaan*



# THE ISSUE DURING COVID-19

“ Domestic violence fears rise along with Alberta COVID cases: spousal violence police calls up 16% ”

“ 'Perfect storm': Growing calls to address domestic violence during coronavirus ”

“ Domestic Violence Has Become A Pandemic In Canada: Where's the Outrage ”

“ Domestic violence rates typically go up when people are faced with a crisis, said RCMP Staff Sgt. Colette Zazulak, who oversees Alberta's community policing unit. ”

In 2020, domestic violence began to emerge as the 'shadow pandemic' - violence against women and girls. More people self isolated at home, with relatively few community coping mechanisms; children isolated in the home without access to their safe spaces such as school, teachers, counsellors, sports; more and more stressors on families including financial uncertainty, job loss, pandemic anxiety, & fear.

We saw call volumes skyrocket with some months quadrupling our average monthly 'new' calls. Our caseloads doubled while revenues fell. Our costs also increased because we had to adapt our delivery of services and address Covid-19 health protocols. And we were not alone. Shelters, other domestic violence and mental health services, law enforcement and victims' services all saw increased calls related to domestic violence.

Women, children and marginalized groups have borne the brunt of the pandemic\* and it's resulted in escalating levels of physical, sexual, & psychological violence against them.

This includes, but is not limited to, just financial and employment hardship. Women have had to bear increased child care and caregiving duties without the usual supports (even in 2 parent households; they've seen their safety and security reduced significantly; women received less access to reproductive and mental health services. Closures & reductions of services, such as those in the court system disproportionately hit women in high conflict separations and divorces and without income, women have been forced to return to abusive homes or to stay with abusive partners.

We normally see clients across the spectrum - some have left, some are in the process of leaving, some have not decided to leave, and some don't plan to leave. Our work always includes building safety for anyone, whatever they decide.

Covid-19 has highlighted the many gaps in service from the legal system to social services, to income support that leave those in abusive situations in unsafe situations and with few choices.

\*Women Bear the Brunt of the Covid-19 Crisis, New Analysis Finds, Centre for Global Development, April 2021.







# MEET THE TEAM

## Board of Directors

It begins with our people starting with our volunteer Board of Directors. They govern SAIF to ensure we meet our mandate to community & operate in accordance with the public trust.



- Cheryl Pollard, President
- Charlene Zoltenko, Vice President
- Dayna Kwasney, Secretary
- Marie Tsang, Treasurer (*appointed Oct 2020*)
- Andre Charrois, Member at Large
- Michelle Chimko, Member at Large (*appointed Feb 2020*)
- Patrick Schiller, Member at Large

**160+ VOLUNTEER HOURS**

## Our Staff

Our staff work tirelessly to provide trauma informed care, offered by experienced professionals, overseen by our in-house Clinical Supervisor.



- Areni Kelleppan, Executive Director
- Teddie (Edna) Knowlton Fussell, Clinical Supervisor & Adult Counsellor
- Gina Ratkovic, Adult Counsellor
- Melodie Brousseau (*left Feb 2020*), Youth & Groups Counsellor
- Rechell Singh (*as of Feb 2020*), Youth & Groups Counsellor
- Ignacio Astete, Education Facilitator
- Teresa Sutherland, Elder Abuse Response Coordinator
- Tanya De La Mare, Admin/Volunteer Coordinator
- Alexandra Brewka, Practicum Student (*as of Oct 2020*)

## Our vision is a society free of abuse

Our mission is to promote healthy respectful relationships through advocacy, counselling, collaboration, education & support services.

SAIF offers a number of programs to residents of St Albert, Sturgeon County & surrounding communities.

Focusing on counselling, education & advocacy, we work with youth, adults, seniors & families.

All of our core programs are free of charge.





# IMPACT SUMMARY

In 2020, our active caseloads more than doubled and our call volume quadrupled in some months. Overall, it was incredibly busy but we ensured minimal wait times for services by moving staff capacity weekly, to meet the community needs as they evolved and changed, and offered services in person, virtually and via phone as public health measures allowed.



**559**

**FAMILIES  
SUPPORTED**



**1,400+**

**INTAKES, INQUIRIES  
& PHONE CONSULTS**



**90+**

**ELDER ABUSE  
CASES**



**200+**

**INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY  
& COMPANY DONORS**



**40+**

**INTERAGENCY  
COLLABORATIONS**



**160+**

**VOLUNTEER  
HOURS**



**3400+**

**COUNSELLING  
HOURS**



**25+**

**GROUP  
SESSIONS**





# INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

## ONE ON ONE COUNSELLING

We offer **10 sessions** per client. This is strength based, solutions focused counselling free of charge. Our adult counselling program offered over:



**2000+ HOURS**  
**TO MORE THAN 380 ADULTS**  
**(INCLUDES SENIORS)**

We provided counselling to adults of all genders 18+ years of age.

**341 safety plans**  
**600+ referrals**  
**900+ inquiries**

We serve all genders, all ethnicities, & all orientations in our service area who reach out to us for help.

The counselling program is a core service within our mission; helping people work towards healthy, respectful relationships. Helping clients with that goal is multifaceted.

Some clients attend, unsure what to think about their current relationship & need information to help form their own perspective. Others are ready to end a relationship but need support & connection to resources to do it safely. Some have recognized their own behaviours towards others is unhealthy & want to gain skills to respond differently. Others may not be able/willing to leave their current situation but benefit from interventions that help them cope & maintain a sense of esteem through difficult situations. Many clients may no longer have contact with an unhealthy partner but want help to cope with remaining trauma and the impacts of abuse.

Many of our clients come to us not knowing they have normalized abusive behaviour. In those circumstances, it's about empowering and informing clients to make healthy choices that are right for them - whether that's learning to advocate for themselves, to leave a relationship, or figure out how they can stay and still keep themselves safe.

## GROUP COUNSELLING

We piloted a variety of healthy relationship 4 week groups including Communication 101, 201, and Conflict Resolution. We offered women only groups and all gender groups.

While some of our groups were cut short due to the pandemic, we resumed small groups in the fall with strict protocols & our groups were well received. Most groups focus on psycho education: building skills for healthy relationships & helping our participants empower themselves to set boundaries, advocate for themselves, & keep themselves safe.







## SAIF EDUCATION

Our education program is offered to Junior & Senior High students in St Albert & Sturgeon County. We help young people learn about healthy dating & relationships; how to set healthy boundaries; avoid cyber bullying/stalking & understand enthusiastic consent.



**240+**  
**YOUTH**

**EDUCATED (AGES 10-18)**

We work with schools, youth sports teams & community groups. In 2020, this program was cut short due to school closures. We didn't deliver any programming from April - Dec.

## FOR YOUTH: COUNSELLING & EDUCATION

The counselling program for youth is short term preventative and solutions focused; working to help young people develop positive coping mechanisms; address trauma; work to reduce self harm and suicidal ideation; and support healthy respectful relationships.

What young people learn in terms of social development and interactions in these formative years can affect all of their relationships throughout their lifetime. This is a significant opportunity to make a change that could have positive impacts and reduce the impact of trauma for the long haul.

And our programs have the added benefit of complementing one another - being in the schools with our education program allows us to get to know youth in the community, give them an opportunity to disclose abuse and help them know supports are available just for them and how they can be accessed by families.



## ONE ON ONE COUNSELLING

We offer **10 sessions** per client. Parents can refer their children & youth can also call - for those who have experienced and/or witnessed family abuse and need support, coping skills, safety plans and/or supportive strategies. Our youth counselling program offered over:

**400+ HOURS**  
**46 YOUTH SUPPORTED**  
**(AGES 12-17)**







# COMMUNITY EDUCATION



While we wished it wasn't the case, everyone knows someone who is being abused or has been abused or were abused themselves. So a lot of our outreach is about informing the general public about what we do, how we can help, and most importantly, what *they* can do to support someone who they know is dealing with abuse. We're a small agency made mightier with an informed & engaged community!

We provide family violence education and awareness, free of charge, to various members of our communities including businesses, agencies, donors, government and other stakeholders. With Covid-19, many sessions were cancelled and those we were able to host and/or attend were done virtually.

## Presentations We Offer:

- SAIF - How We Can Support You
- SAIF - Family Violence Awareness
- Make It Our Business
- Cut It Out Program
- Elder Abuse Awareness



## NEW DIRECTIONS

New Directions is a 22 week facilitated group program for moms & their children who have experienced &/or witnessed domestic abuse. While intake is conducted through the summer, the program runs through the fall & winter.

**7 MOMS  
15  
KIDS/TEENS**



In the 2020/2021 cohort, we started with 7 families (the max. we can accept is 10) from within a 75 km radius.

Meeting on a weekly basis, we start with a communal meal and then move to psycho educational groups to support moms in parenting, dealing with family violence trauma, building resiliency & coping supports. Children & youth have their own groups to work on self-regulation, communication & coping. Each week is themed and we bring the family unit together to work on skills, healthy interactions, activities. All of this had to be adapted to meet Covid-19 protocols.

**“ It was such a wonderful opportunity to connect with other moms & support my kids. I didn't have to be alone this year. ”**

*one of the moms participating in this year's program.*





# ELDER ABUSE RESPONSE

Our Elder Abuse program is centred around a community coordinated response model where we coordinate a wraparound community centric approach to services for seniors being abused or vulnerable to abuse. For Elder Abuse, the commonly understood standard is anyone 50+ years of age.

We work with the St Albert Collaborative which also includes:

- St. Albert Primary Care Network
- St Albert RCMP
- Victims Services
- Sturgeon Hospital
- Covenant Health Geriatrics
- Home Care
- Community Village
- St Albert Seniors' Association



**92**  
**SENIORS**  
**SUPPORTED**

If there was a recognized 'shadow pandemic' for women & girls, Covid-19 had a significant impact in creating fear, anxiety, neglect, & social isolation for many of our seniors. 2020 highlighted the inadequacy of long term care homes for many of our most vulnerable as well as highlighting how much community supports & social connections play in keeping seniors safe, secure, healthy, & much more capable of aging in place. Without those social & community based supports, many seniors began to fall through the cracks, or find themselves in unsafe situations & conditions. Not just in fatalities, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the well being of our seniors with many calls for complex medical neglect, abuse, & financial & even sexual abuse.



**26**  
**PARTNER**  
**AGENCIES**

At the beginning of 2020, we didn't have funding for the program (it having been cut from the GoA Victims of Crime Fund in December 2019) but the Board agreed to dip into reserves in order to provide services for as long as we could while seeking other sources of funding. By April, we were able to access a federal grant, donor funds, Community Foundations Canada, & United Way Covid-19 funds to carry the program to the end of the year. Thankfully, by cobbling several sources, we saw no interruption to service delivery for seniors & their families reaching out to this program.





# VOLUNTEERS

Like many organizations in the charitable sector, we rely on volunteers to help us with our work. For the most part, our programs and services do not include volunteers for reasons of confidentiality and to provide privacy for our clients. But, when we can use volunteers, we are so very grateful to have them!

Our Board is comprised completely of community volunteers (up to 9 each year). They attend monthly meetings, support fund development initiatives & sit on committees intrinsic to the governance of SAIF.

In 2020, we recruited & initiated a Clinical Advisory Committee to support our work. Made of up professionals working in the sector, they help provide advice on best practices & help us keep up on innovations in treatment, support, & advocacy.

And then we have our pinch hitters - those community members who rise to the occasion when we call! Whether that's for third party events like Easter Bunny driveway photos or making purple masks we can sell, or helping us in the office, we would never be able to extend our reach or be able to do all we do without our dedicated & amazing volunteers.



**30+  
VOLUNTEERS**

**370+  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS**



## WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA, & OTHER MARKETING

In 2020, continued to build on our monthly newsletter & added 6 months of Ask an Expert to our blogs - answering frequently asked questions from clients & callers.



TWITTER: We upped our followers by 5% in 2020.



INSTAGRAM: We increased our followers by over 15%.



FACEBOOK: We engaged 5300+ people with our posts.



LINKEDIN: We grew our followers by 20%.

We ran a second successful 4 week campaign in the summer of 2020 regarding *Myths in Relationships* including info about boundaries, consent, gender roles & the wrong things the media tells us about relationships.

We also teamed up with the Gazette to run full page ads in November as part of Family Violence Prevention Month.

We're so fortunate that we've had the opportunity to share what we do and additional insight into domestic violence and abuse in the communities we serve in the local media including the St Albert Gazette, CBC Radio and other local news outlets.







In July 2020, we put together a [video of SAIF's impact](#) & our work in the community with the help of Reel Communications.

## IREEN'S LEGACY - SAIF 30 YEARS LATER...



We moved in June 2020 to our new location with 3 counselling offices with bright floor to ceiling windows & a tranquil, welcoming reception area...with lots of plexiglass, hand sanitizer, and wipeable surfaces! Special thanks to T8N 100 Men who covered the costs of our move, our Board volunteers who helped paint the space, & Rod Gouchey (& son, Troy) for helping to install shelving, additional acoustics, & storage systems prior to our move.







John Carle & Mark Kay walked the streets of St Albert's neighbourhoods in Easter Bunny suits donated by Karries Kostumes, taking pix in driveways & porches that raised over \$3,000!

St Albert Wine Fairies Spring 2020 campaign raised over \$3,000!

Zach Holmes, a young teen in St Albert, took it upon himself to run 'Christmas in the Park' in Noble Park in St Albert & raised over \$6,000!

We started selling purple masks, sewn by volunteers, starting in October to recognize November as Family Violence Prevention Month & raised over \$2,000!

Instead of our annual Red Shoe Gala, we put a call out to the community for a year end donor campaign & you all showed up for us in a huge way! Our goal was \$50K & we exceeded that with tremendous community support.

**St. Albert Wine Fairies fundraiser for SAIF**  
Fundraiser for Stop Abuse in Families Society by Julie DeMott · 🌐

Donate Share ...

**Fundraiser Ended**  
\$3,210 raised of \$10,000 🎯

Donate to charity

**Fundraiser Progress**

120 donated	34 invited	25 shared
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**About**

Want to join me in supporting a good cause? I'm raising money for ST ALBERT STOP ABUSE IN FAMILIES SOCIETY and your contribution will make an impact, whether you donate a lot or a little. Anything helps. Thank you for your support.

Julie DeMott • May 21, 2020

**Created By**

Julie DeMott

On Facebook since 2007

# NOVEMBER

## is Family Violence Prevention Month

Together, we can work towards a society free of abuse...

**Children & Youth**

In Canada, surveys indicate that almost **1/3** of adults have been

**Adults & Families**

It's estimated that over **2/3** of Canadians have been impacted by

**Seniors**

Recent studies indicate that almost **700,000** adults in Canada have

“Our year end donor campaign in place of our gala raised over 60K! ”







# The Giving Tree

*31 years of community support*

Our Giving Tree resides in our new SAIF Office for all to see! Each leaf bears the names of donors who have supported us. We continue to add new donor 'leaves' to the tree as the community joins us in our efforts of working towards a society free of abuse. Look how many people supported us this past year - amazing!



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA



CANADIAN  
WOMEN'S  
FOUNDATION



DONORS OF \$400-\$500 GIFTS

NICHOLAS STEINKE

FERN WATSON ANONYMOUS

THOMAS HOLMES



PAUL BELTER - \$2,100

QUANTZ LAW - \$1,000

ANONYMOUS - \$1,200

SHEILA & MICHAEL STEGER - \$1,025

ANDRE & LYNNE CHARROIS - \$2,000

INT'L BROTHERHOOD OF BOILERMAKERS - \$1,000

ANONYMOUS

ST ALBERT DENTAL  
CENTRE

DARYL WRIGHT

ARENI KELLEPPAN

RANDALL  
NERBAS



CIVIC ORGANIZATION  
DONATION



ST. ALBERT COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
*for generations to come*



The St Albert Community Information & Volunteer Centre permanently closed in July 2020. But such a long standing organization (40 years!) requires its Board to do lots of behind the scenes work to tie up all the loose ends.

One of those loose ends is to responsibly handle left over funds which are often distributed to other charities. The CIVC Board chose to give SAIF a gift of \$20,000 at year end to support families dealing with the impacts of violence and abuse.

We are so grateful to them for choosing us for this generous gift and for all the work they've been doing to wind down their organization. It's not easy work and even in the midst of their loss, they're continuing to support our community. Thank you so much to the Board & supporters of CIVC!

CORE NETWORK SOLUTIONS  
(REID JOHNSON)

Many people may not be aware that Reid has been quietly & without fanfare, been very generous to SAIF for years.

In 2020, he donated over \$5,300 in IT services - these are critical to our ability to deliver secure online counselling & support services...

Since 2012, the St Albert Premier Royal LePage Team has been the single largest business donor to SAIF, having raised over \$175K for our programs & services!



People say it takes a village. We think it takes a **WHOLE** community pulling together...

LISA  
NEULS

DAVE LINKLATER

TIM  
DOWNEY

INDUSTRIAL  
SOLUTIONS

VICTOR BELLAY

BETTE JO DRISDELLE

SHIMA  
ZONNEVELD

STEPHEN  
BIDDLE

JENNIFER MCCURDY

ERIC  
HOLOWACH

JOHN & DIANNE BETTON

SUSAN  
MAEDA

ANNETTE LEBLANC

STEPHANIE MICHAELS

CINDY & RYAN SWEET

NORTHBRIDGE FINANCIAL CORP  
\$2,500

INSYNC SUPPLY LTD  
\$5,000

ANONYMOUS DONOR  
\$3,713



United Way



OUR MONTHLY/REGULAR  
DONORS WHO GIVE ALL  
YEAR ROUND...

IREEN SLATER

PATRICK SCHILLER

CRAIG  
PILGRIM

MARLA GALLANT

LAVERNE & DAVID

CHERYL DUMONT

ANONYMOUS

MAJEAU

STEPHANIE MICHAELS

MIKE MACKELL



So many of you gave to our Year End campaign. The generosity of our community humbles us.

CHRISTINE  
CASWELL

NEIL  
KOROTASH

MELANIE GOULD

CARLY  
CHALUPA

SUSAN HAMPER

JOE CAIN

RAYMA  
PETERSON

DANIELLE  
KIESMAN

SARAH DAWN

ANONYMOUS

ADAM DYCK

ANONYMOUS

JENNIFER SMYTHE

ANONYMOUS

DESJARDINS  
GOODSPARK PROGRAM  
& CHARLENE ZOLTENKO  
INSURANCE

\$2,000

TO SUPPORT OUR ELDER ABUSE PROGRAM



STANDARD GENERAL



We've all been in this together b/c YOU'VE been there to help us get the services to those who need us...

CHRISTINE  
KOHLHAUSER

DAN  
OSBORNE

GAGE ATKINSON

ALISTAIR  
MCBRIDE

SHELLEY  
MARTELL

JEFF WEDMAN

ANONYMOUS

TRINA ALAIN

ERIN RICHMOND

JUDITH  
VICTOOR

JOANNE  
CZEKANSKI

CINDY VANDENBERG

CARMEN  
BATEMAN

KARYN GAMMIE

KIRK  
CROCKET

ANONYMOUS