



Birchway
NIAGARA

2023 | 2024
GRATITUDE REPORT

A note from the Executive Director



Dear Allies,

2023-2024 has been a time of change and challenge.

Over a year has now passed since Women's Place became Birchway Niagara and, together, we committed ourselves to a new mission and name. These changes reflected our collective belief not only in the critical work of protecting and empowering women and children, but also in the importance of engaging everyone in the work of addressing the root causes of violence. I am inspired by and grateful for the work that our staff and community have done as we work together to make our new mission a reality.

The Niagara Region's declaration last September that intimate partner violence is an epidemic, and the current consideration of Bill 173, which would result in Ontario doing the same, gives me cautious hope that change is on the horizon. As dozens of communities across the province respond to this recommendation from the Renfrew County Inquest, it is my sincere hope that more resources will be invested to help end abuse and violence.

So many challenges continue to face us. As our 2021-2024 strategic plan comes to a close and we embark on planning for the next three years, I look forward to working with you to face these challenges together. Whether we work to remove barriers for individuals in our community experiencing abuse, such as constructing pet-friendly shelter spaces, or expand programs to increase public awareness and prevention, the work of building a community without abuse is not possible without you.

Thank you for being an ally against abuse.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Mathieu".

WE WILL

be a shoulder to lean on, a voice to advocate for, a space to feel safe in, an ally to trust, a guide to navigate, and a counsellor to heal for everyone affected by all forms of abuse.

Every life lost was unique.



WE EXIST
**to protect and
empower.**

WE WANT
**a community
without abuse.**

**From November 26, 2022 to November 25, 2023, 62 women and children in Ontario
violently lost their lives in gender-related killings.**

Three of the victims were here in Niagara.

During the same period in the previous year, the number of femicide-related deaths in Ontario was 53.

This staggering increase in femicide rates must be addressed.

In the coming months and years, your continued support of Birchway Niagara will honour the lives that have been lost by helping to address gender-based violence, both by protecting survivors and building a safer community.

As an ally, you will help us to reach our goal of expanding the number of safe beds in South Niagara even further, from 40 to 45. You will also support existing outreach and prevention programs, and help to build expanded services for everyone in our community who needs help, not only women.

Whatever role you play, whether you help to raise awareness, volunteer your time, or donate your resources, you are making an impact.

*Photos and statistics: 2022-2023 Annual Femicide List presented
by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH)*



“I found myself in a bright, light place... they create so much positivity and safe vibes here.”

I would like to start my story at Birchway Niagara, where I am right now with my two precious children. We have been here since we left our family home in September 2023, and when we arrived, the staff treated us with big hearts and kind souls. I couldn't stop crying after all that we had been through. I was so happy to be surrounded by people who are responsive and caring. It has been a life-changing experience.

My husband had tried to control my every step and breath. He manipulated me. He gaslit me. He abused me emotionally, psychologically, financially, physically and sexually. I couldn't even pick out my own outfits. To him, I was his property, an object, and I required his permission to do anything, whether I wanted to go outside, have friends over, or even express my thoughts honestly. He judged me, and became angry over simple things I did “wrong,” like putting a serving fork on the wrong side of a plate or doing the laundry in a way he didn't like.

For three long years, my children watched as he controlled and belittled me, yelled at me, disrespected me, beat me and even sometimes dragged me by my hair. I worried about the impact of witnessing his abuse on them. Finally, I could not accept this existence any longer. Despite my confusion and fear, I knew we had to get out.

My husband had made sure I had no access to a car, so I fled on foot with one of my children to a friend's home, then picked up my other child from school before my husband realized we were gone. We then came to Birchway Niagara, which has shown us the best of humanity.

When we arrived we barely had anything, but everything we need to rebuild our piece of mind and life has been provided.

Thank you to every member of our community who has had an impact on this blessed place. You have given me my freedom back, and a way out of a house that was never a home, but a prison.

*Some details have been changed to protect client confidentiality.



Unless all members of our community are allies, it will never end.

Community programs hold the keys to a future without violence

A key goal of Birchway Niagara's 2021–2024 strategic plan was to raise awareness of the prevalence and impact of abuse and violence in our community and provide education to facilitate the steps needed to end it.

With the help of our allies like Women and Gender Equality Canada and community donors, great strides have been made in reaching this goal. For instance, it has been possible to create the position of a permanent, full-time prevention and public education manager. By having a member of our team dedicated almost exclusively to building awareness and community partnerships, thousands of members of our community have been able to take part in educational programming or connect with Birchway Niagara at community information events since October 2021. Existing partnerships have been deepened and new partnerships have been formed with Niagara College, Brock University, and many other organizations across the region, engaging them as allies in ending abuse.

In addition to a dedicated staff person, Birchway Niagara now also has a skilled team of "Speaker's Bureau" volunteers who are happy to make presentations at community events or attend information fairs throughout the region.

If you would like to book a presentation for your students, employees, or organization, or invite Birchway Niagara to your next information fair, we would love to hear from you!

Since
October
2021...



members of our community attended an education program or visited an information table.



of these individuals were men or boys



Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada

Women and Gender Equality Canada

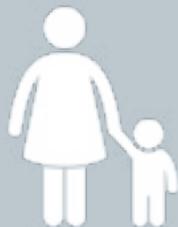


Statement of Revenue and Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2024

REVENUE	2024	2023	EXPENSES	2024	2023
Ministry of Community and Social Services – Annualized funding	1,493,949	1,493,949	Emergency Shelter	2,005,100	1,960,684
Ministry of Community and Social Services – One-time funding	200,668	116,525	Legal & Housing Support Services	217,684	206,090
CEVAW *	30,119	33,987	Prevention and Public Education	83,608	83,586
MAG Family Court Support Worker	47,500	47,500	Special Projects	101,682	190,510
Branscombe Family Foundation Grant	0	42,000	Fundraising	279,739	256,040
Donations and Fundraising	842,202	677,642	CEVAW*	30,119	33,987
Federal Government	224,191	291,891	Management & Admin	249,551	240,113
Regional and Municipal Funding	24,450	34,850			
United Way of South Niagara	59,777	59,777			
Special Projects	31,344	58,194			
Miscellaneous Grants	17,000	12,000			
Niagara Prosperity Initiative	65,091	16,882			
Niagara Community Foundation	36,296	17,203			
Investment & Miscellaneous Income	77,669	44,837			
	3,150,256	2,947,236	Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses from Operations	182,773	-23,773
			Bequest (One time Legacy Gift)		136,553
			Excess of Revenue over Expenses	182,773	112,780
			Allocated to Stabilization Fund	-182,773	
			Allocated to Building Fund		-112,780
				0	0

How you are helping survivors, in shelter and in the community.

What your gifts made possible in 2023-24



**148 women &
127 children stayed in shelter**

**257 clients worked with a
Child and Youth Intervention
Advocate**

**1620 support calls and texts
received**

**577 clients worked with
a Transitional Housing
Support Worker**

**229 clients worked with
our Family Court Support
Worker**



Did you know that since December 2022, Birchway Niagara has been offering an after-care program to clients after they leave shelter?

The program connects clients with a trained counsellor who can provide an ongoing source of support as they transition into their own home.

Knowing that someone is still in their corner to listen, and to help them address the challenges of building a new life reduces the risk that a woman will return to her abuser.

“
Sometimes I don't
believe I am strong, but
when you visit you give
me the strength I need.
AFTER-CARE CLIENT

**53 women and 20 children
used our after-care
program in 2023-24**

Passionate allies like YOU are changing the future...

One event, one volunteer hour and one donation at a time...



Over the past year, Birchway Niagara's allies have enthusiastically taken on the task of raising awareness of our new name and mission.

While a name change can sometimes result in a temporary decrease in an organization's "presence" in a community, thanks to everyone spreading the word and enthusiastically walking with Birchway Niagara into this new era, our three signature fundraising activities, the Birchway Book Riot, Brunch, Bid & Bowl and our Daily Raffle together raised more than in any previous year!

\$222,722.09

How much you helped to raise by participating in
Birchway Niagara fundraisers

This year, our volunteer team also expanded. In addition to the Speaker's Bureau, Birchway Niagara has been able to add more in-shelter programming to our clients, such as paint nights, a fun face painting session during March Break and even a homework club!

By donating your time as a volunteer or board member, or supporting our fundraisers as a participant, sponsor, donor or media partner, you are doing so much to help end the cycle of violence.

Thank you for being our voices in the community and for sharing your passion for a better tomorrow.



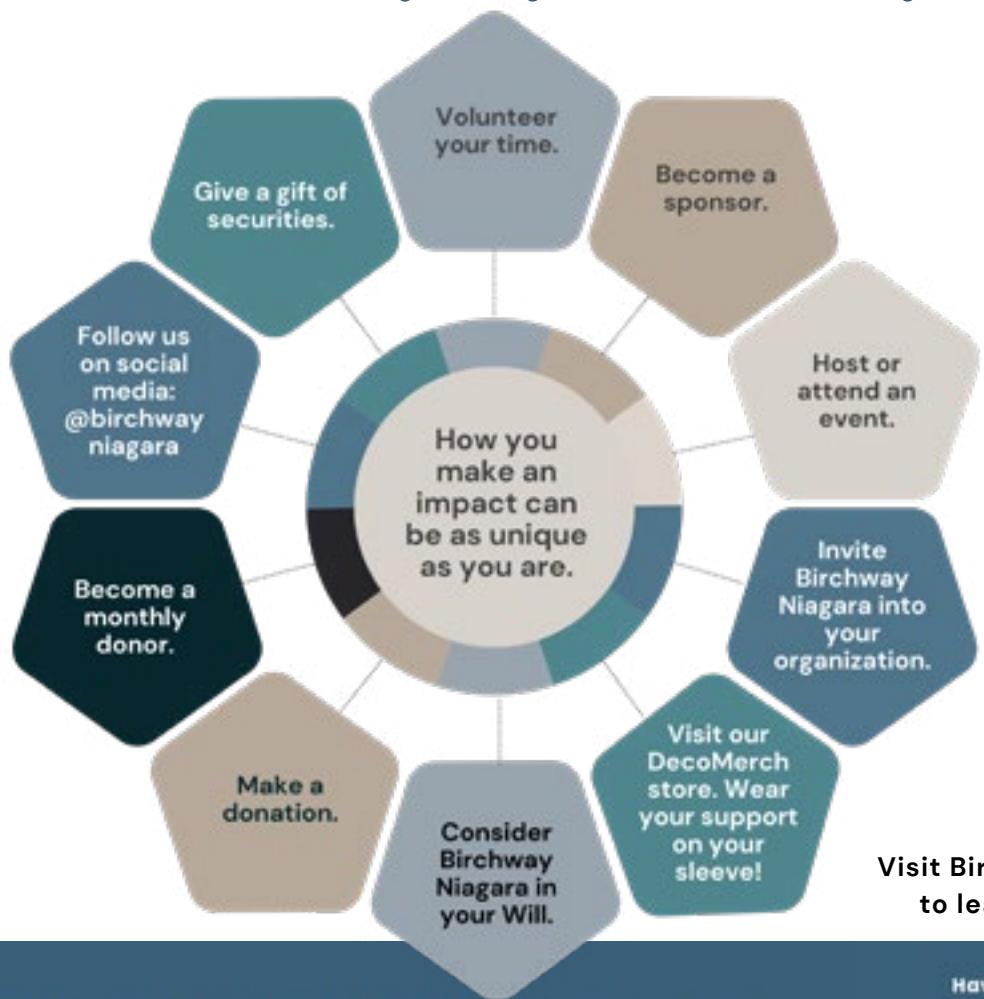
Third-party events not only raise funds and much-needed supplies, but also awareness in every corner of our community.



\$161,924!!!

From Smile Cookies, to fun triathalons, to golf events, to yoga classes and everything in between, Birchway Niagara's third-party event hosts are raising awareness and funds to end abuse in Niagara.

There are so many ways to be an ally...



You can change the world with a charitable gift in your Will, while still supporting those you love.

Learn more at Willpower.ca

Have you calculated your Will Power?

My assets

My liabilities

Total

Your gift

\$10,000

Leave a gift of \$10,000 to Birchway Niagara

\$190,000

Message to Birchway Niagara from your assets



Outstanding Community Partner - Amy Layton



Amy Layton has been motivated to raise funds and awareness for Birchway Niagara because of a deep personal connection to the cause. As a local realtor, she is passionate about the work of the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation. In 2016, these connections motivated her to start the Lip Sync Battle Fundraiser, a annual night of fun and fundraising that has raised \$50,416.88 to support survivors of abuse. She wasn't content to stop there, however, and volunteers as a member of both the Speaker's Bureau and the Brunch, Bid & Bowl committee (an event that she also sponsors), and wherever else help is needed!

Outstanding Volunteer - Dean Adams



Dean has been an ally of Birchway Niagara for nearly a decade, and has encouraged others to join him in protecting and empowering survivors of abuse. Whether he is transporting boxes of cereal from his former employer Post Foods, greeting guests at bingo, explaining our services at an information table, welcoming guests at the Book Riot, supporting our auction at Brunch, Bid and Bowl or doing any of the other long list of items that we talk him into every year, Dean is truly an extension of our staff, and we are honoured to have him on our team.

Outstanding Staff Member - Victoria Antonio



Victoria is a dedicated, compassionate Women's Intervention Advocate who is an incredible counsellor and teammate. She goes above and beyond by providing training to student placements and Birchway Niagara volunteers, and does not hesitate to take a lead on projects like ensuring colleagues are up to speed on our database and critical skills like naloxone training. She also eagerly supports fundraising by forming a bowling team every year, volunteers at events, and raises awareness of Birchway Niagara events and activities.

**Congratulations
to our 2024**

**Outstanding
Ally Award
Winners!**

**Please join us in
celebrating three
individuals who are
community leaders and
passionate advocates for
Birchway Niagara.**

**Thank you for lighting the
way to a safer future for
everyone impacted by
abuse.**



24hr Support Line
905-356-5800

Call or text. Collect calls accepted.

8903 McLeod Rd
Niagara Fall ON
L2H 3S6
905-356-3933

Charitable Registration # 131135717RR0001

www.birchway.ca

@birchwayniagara