

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



Ground Breaking Croftonbrook Phase 3
Photo by Chris Marshall

*We envision people living free from
poverty, violence and abuse.*

IWAV provides support services and housing to women, inclusive of cis, trans and gender non-conforming women and their children who are impacted by violence and/or abuse.

Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair

In April 2020, it was difficult to see through the immediate and rapidly changing needs and imagine what the year ahead was going to hold. The pandemic and associated societal changes required IWAV to adapt how we provide our essential services, and our team navigated together through these dynamic and difficult times.

Throughout the pandemic, IWAV's dedicated staff showed tremendous courage and creativity in their care for our clients and community, who were significantly impacted by periods of lockdown and social restrictions. The isolation created additional pressures on women and their children who were kept at home with abusers. The rate and severity of violence, abuse, and sexual assault increased in Canada during 2020, and we saw this in the Southern Gulf Islands. IWAV was able to continue providing anti-violence services through the transition house, outreach, and counselling services for women and their children.

A key revenue source for IWAV's anti-violence programs is the thrift store, which re-opened after 3.5 months of closure in 2020. A donation station in the parking lot and additional staff allowed us to keep the store accessible and available to our community members. COVID grant funds from the Salt Spring Island Foundation, Country Grocer, the federal government, Women's Shelters Canada, and BC Housing helped us provide support for our clients and residents and continue to operate our service delivery at full capacity. IWAV also received generous donations from local businesses and individual donors.

Another outcome of the pandemic was the need to creatively pivot IWAV's annual fundraiser and events. Instead of our farm to table dinner in the fall, we offered a local charcuterie picnic box delivered to community members, in partnership with our champion Chental Wilson at Wilco Construction. People were able to have delicious food created by Haidee Hart in the comfort of their own home. On December 6, IWAV and The Circle co-hosted an online Zoom vigil for the

National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Lastly, IWAV partnered with The Circle and Graffiti Theatre to create a film of local artists and activists to celebrate the March 8 International Women's Day. All of these were innovative approaches that stretched our beliefs about what was possible and created new ways of connection.

While all of this was going on, IWAV expanded on a number of levels:

- We continued working on the housing development at Croftonbrook. The 22-unit apartment building for seniors and people with disabilities was completed, and new residents moved in during December 2020.
- Site work and preparations were also underway for the next 34-unit apartment building, which began in the spring of 2021.
- Several new members joined the board.
- Our services and staff team have expanded to include a new Sexual Assault Response Program through a provincial grant from EVA BC.
- IWAV board and management team continued to explore and develop processes to increase diversity and inclusion within our board and staff team and to the benefit and equity of our resident and clients.

The 2020–21 year has been a combination of challenges and successes beyond the scale we have seen before. Through all of this, our team has worked very hard and been well-supported by our volunteers, donors, and board members in order to rise to the challenges and provide important services to our clients and residents. We are deeply grateful to all of you who have been a part of this journey.

Kisae Petersen
Executive Director

Alicia Herbert
Board Chair

IWAV Values

Respect: *We demonstrate respect for our clients and each other*

Integrity: *We maintain the confidentiality and dignity of our clients*

Compassion: *We are kind and caring in our work*

Resourcefulness: *We seek out opportunities to achieve our mission*

Safety: *We provide an environment that feels safe for our clients and staff*



IWAV Picnic Fundraiser



IWAV & The Circle host December 6 Vigil



SSI Transition House Responds to Challenges of 2020–21:

Heather Picotte, Transition House Manager

The past year has certainly been a challenging one. COVID-19 and a variety of other stressors have added a new dimension to IWAV's work — work that involves patience, flexibility, and nimble decision-making. Let's look at how the IWAV transition house responded to some difficult situations and trends in 2020–21.

A Rise in Domestic Violence

Globally, rates of domestic violence increased during the pandemic. For some people, being stuck at home, financial strain, boredom, and fewer connections, lockdown was the perfect storm for a sharp increase in mental health issues and the violence that often results. Ironically and sadly, it has been a time of both greater violence and fewer stays in transition houses: individuals experiencing violence have had more difficulty reaching out for support or making exit plans because they've had little privacy to do so.

IWAV's experience reflected this disturbing trend. During the first quarter of 2020–21, Phase 1 of lockdown, the transition house hosted only three residents, none of whom stayed the usual 30 days. Realizing the potential for increased violence, we did our best to let the community know we were open and taking residents. By July, our numbers picked up.

In August, we knew people still needed support but couldn't safely reach out, so we set out to establish a new webchat feature for our crisis line. Webchats are advantageous for those in controlling relationships and those comfortable with web-based technology. The webchat launched in December.

Increasing Mental Health Issues

According to Statistics Canada, COVID-19 has had a negative impact on Canadians' mental health, with 12% fewer adults reporting good mental health in 2020 than in 2019. Youth ages 15–24, women, and visible minorities have experienced the worst mental health decline. Although impossible to accurately measure these trends in our small resident population, staff have noted a subtle shift in the mental health issues from what we typically see; most apparent is a rise in anger and generalized anxiety. We've altered our practice to meet these changes.

These days, we encourage crisis calls that might have nothing to do with staying at the transition house — offering support with safety or exit planning or just a friendly ear. We're also being more active with followup with residents after discharge, and several ex-residents over the past year have enjoyed checking in weekly or monthly with staff. Our engagement with mental health professionals has stepped up, with more formal agreements and regular connections between the transition house and hospital, MHSU, and other health providers.

The Continuing Housing Crisis

Although we ended the 2020–21 fiscal having seen fewer total residents compared with the previous year (38 down from 55), the average length of stay increased by five nights (23 up from 18). The ongoing housing crisis, in addition to COVID restrictions, had a hand in prolonging the search for safe, affordable housing. Harbour House hotel granted us space when we had more residents than beds, and BC Housing funded these. Because many residents stayed more than 30 days and because COVID reduced our bed capacity, we were happy to have the hotel option for overflow.

Disproportionate Trauma, Violence, and Mental Health Issues in LGBTQ & BIPOC Communities

Statistics Canada reported that COVID-related mental health and violence has most severely impacted LGBTQ2+ and BIPOC individuals — populations that were already disproportionately burdened prior to the pandemic. Staff at the transition house are engaged in ongoing conversation and negotiation about how we can better serve people in the LGBTQ2+ and BIPOC communities. A complicating factor is that people in rural areas are four times more likely to experience gender-based violence and sexual assault, so we know that Salt Spring's minority groups are more at risk than ever. We're closely involved with IWAV's work around justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (JEDI), and we look forward to the staff JEDI training.



Salt Spring Island Transition House & Crisis Line

428 crisis calls

30 women and 8 children served

887 number of bed nights

23 nights for average length of stay

Outreach Services

Education, safety planning, risk management, advocacy, emotional support, education, referrals, transition planning for women whose lives have been affected by violence or abuse.

81 women served



PEACE Program for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence

Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling, and Empowerment through individualized psycho-educational programming for children and youth and support for parents/guardians.

22 women served

17 children served

Stopping the Violence Counselling

Counselling for women who have been affected by violence in relationships, sexualized assault, and childhood abuse.

60 women served

The Cedars Second Stage

Second stage transitional housing and support for women and children who have been affected by violence.

13 women served

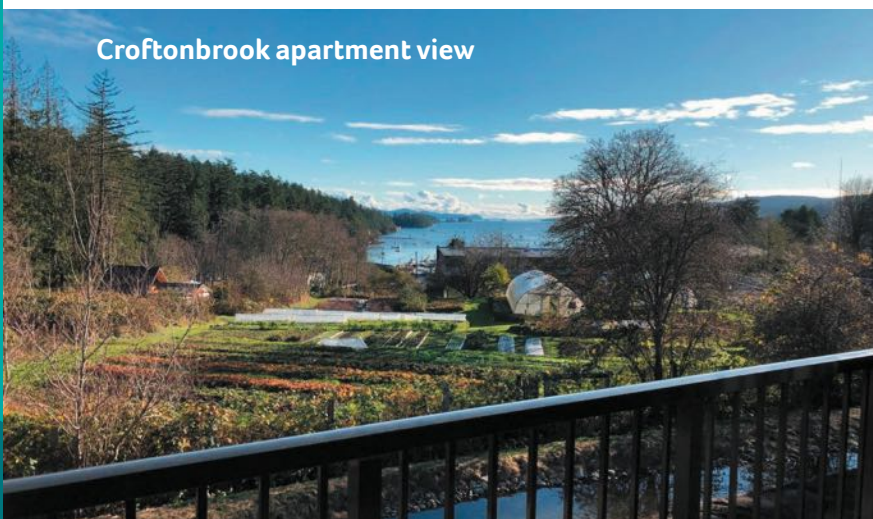
9 children served

Croftonbrook

Permanent rental housing for seniors and people with disabilities who can live independently.

42 tenants

Croftonbrook apartment view



New apartments at Croftonbrook



OUTREACH Partners with RISE Women's Legal Centre

Tina Simpson, Outreach Coordinator

One of the biggest challenges with outreach work is providing legal support. Navigating the law requires professional help, which is expensive and has limited availability. IWAV is a community partner with RISE Women's Legal Centre, which gives our clients direct access to fast legal advice and empowers our clients by offering them insight into how the legal system works.

The following example highlights the benefits of this partnership to our clients:

One of our clients was a young mom who was receiving legal aid and had an upcoming court date. Legal aid lawyers offer their time to clients with a specific budget. As a result, they're often not available to discuss matters until the day of court. Our client had no idea what to expect at court. She had reached out to her lawyer many times, did not get a response, and felt anxious that she would lose her daughter at the hearing because her needs were not being expressed.

So that she could ask some questions, we set up a meeting with RISE who explained that her court case was a family case conference and not a trial. They reassured her that

she was able to state her needs at this conference, and no decisions would be made regarding custody unless she agreed to it. This alleviated so much of her anxiety. She also found out that she could have an interpreter present, as English was her second language; she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to find the English words to express her needs while she was in stress.

Our client left this meeting with a sense of control and confidence in attending her court date. Because RISE conferences are set up with a case worker (Outreach) present, we're able to take notes and support our clients through the whole legal process, with continual direct support from legal professionals. Our client went from feeling scared and anxious to empowered and able to voice her needs to the judge with confidence.

This is a great example of how Outreach Services plays a key role connecting clients with existing support networks so that they can heal and continue to walk towards peace.

The Transitions Thrift Store

The Transitions Thrift Store is IWAV's social enterprise, which means that all proceeds from the store are used to help fund our transition house, outreach, and counselling programs. This is crucial to core operations, as government funders don't fully fund our essential programs, and IWAV must fundraise to cover the full program costs.

Due to COVID, the thrift store was closed for 3.5 months and re-opened in July 2020. To re-open, the store uses a shipping container as the "donation station," which allows donations to be received and sorted outside of the store. Due to the store closure, we were able to fully appreciate the thrift store's role in providing affordable household items and clothing to island residents.

Another COVID impact was that fewer people were available to volunteer and, therefore, more paid staff had to be added. These increased costs meant fewer proceeds for IWAV's programs. IWAV is very grateful to its dedicated



Thrift Store volunteer

volunteers, and we hope to continue having an integrated volunteer component within store operations.

That said, IWAV received a generous COVID emergency grant from the Salt Spring Island Foundation to offset lost thrift store revenue. Federal wage subsidies and rent subsidies helped to offset the financial impacts. Overall, due to the generous support of the community as donors and shoppers, the thrift store was successful in generating program funds.

Board of Directors

The board of directors for the 2020–21 year includes Alicia Herbert, Philippa Tattersall, Kristi Reynolds, Jayne Lloyd-Jones, Sophia Jackson, Mylene Dammel-Sherrin, and Natalie Gold.

IWAV respectfully recognizes that our organization is located in the traditional unceded territory of the Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples.



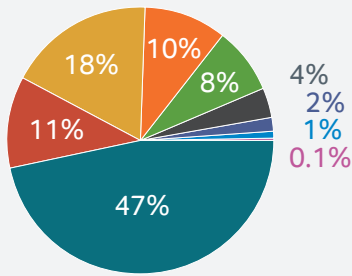
Cedars Resident Quote

5-year-old child

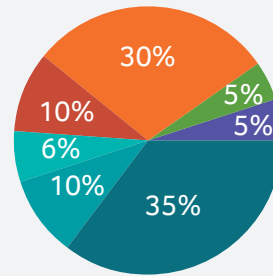
"Mama, thank you that you chose we live in this house. I really like it here. Everyone is so nice. And I like that I have space to play inside the house and also outside. I like the playground. And I really like to play in the trees!"

2020-2021 Financial Statement

Income



Expenses



Anti-Violence Program Government Funding	\$802,384
Thrift Store Sales	\$189,562
Rental Income	\$301,906
Affordable Housing Government Funding	\$172,986
Covid Funding	\$137,007
Donations	\$62,200
Grants	\$29,602
Fundraising Income	\$12,654
Interest	\$2,199
Total	\$1,710,500

Transition House Program	\$549,772
Counselling Programs	\$151,459
Outreach Programs	\$94,180
Thrift Store	\$149,465
Affordable Housing	\$457,779
Covid Programming	\$74,016
Administration and Audit	\$73,836
Total	\$1,550,507

IWAV's fiscal year is April 1 to March 31.

Donations & Funding

Islanders Working Against Violence is grateful to our funders, government partners, community organizations, local businesses, and the many individual donors who support our society's anti-violence and housing work.

In this past year, IWAV appreciates the local business donations from Country Grocer, Coastal Currents Adventures, Investors Group (Markus Wenzel), Salt Spring Kitchen Co., First West Credit Union, Monsoon Coast, and Cedar Mountain Studios.

IWAV welcomes donations by cheque and online.

Our website includes a link for donations through credit card or for stock transfers. All donations are used at the direction of the donor (i.e. specific program) or are used in service delivery to directly benefit women and children who access the anti-violence programs. IWAV is a registered charity and will issue a tax receipt for all donations.



Islanders Working Against Violence

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iwav.org