



ANNUAL REPORT

2019/20

**alberni
community
& women's
services
society**

Alberni Community and Women's Services Society

2019/20 Annual Report

3082 Third Avenue

Port Alberni, BC V9Y 2A5

Main Office: 250-724-7111

Transition House: 250-724-2223



OUR VISION

We will have a safe, secure, and nurturing community that is free from violence and abuse.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to building a healthy community and improving the status of women. We provide a safe place and innovative services for women, children, men, and families.

OUR PURPOSE

- To promote the equal status of women and educate the community on women's issues.
- To provide an emergency shelter for women and their children.
- To provide counselling, outreach, victim services and other supports to women, children, youth, men, and families.
- To develop and provide new programs and services for women, children, youth, men, and families to help build a healthy and safe community. These services could include housing for adults, and/or counselling, outreach, education and other supports and services for women, children, youth, men and families.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we present to you the annual report for our fiscal year from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 from Alberni Community & Women's Services Society (ACAWS).

For forty years, ACAWS has worked to provide housing, support services, assistance and referrals to those fleeing from domestic violence or abuse.

Last year, was a tremendous year for ACAWS filled with community support.

In November 2019, Chris Fenton of The Fenton Real Estate Team dedicated a 100-kilometre trek across the Sahara Desert in support of women and children fleeing violence. He presented a cheque to ACAWS for \$4,666 for his efforts.

Throughout the holidays, we held a successful open house and organized donation hampers and a "secret Santa" for many of our clients. Special thanks to the Coulson Group of Companies, North Island College, Coastal Community Credit Union, Boston Pizza (ladies' night), First Baptist Church and the Saturday Quilters for your support.

Our annual Coldest Night of the Year Walk (CNOY) was held on February 22, 2020. It was also a huge success, raising \$38,858! ACAWS partnered with the Port Alberni Port Authority to dedicate the 2020 CNOY to former Mayor and ACAWS president, Gillian Trumper. This year, our lead sponsor was Coulson's Group of Companies. Since 2016, the first year that we held the event, Alberni District Co-op has been an ongoing sponsor. Other participants included the Rotary Club of Port Alberni, Scotiabank, Royal LePage, the family of Gillian Trumper and several residents and families of the Alberni Valley.

Also, in February, ACAWS received 16 beautiful handmade quilts for our PEACE program and 5 quilts for our Transition House from the Parksville Quilt House Quilters Guild.

ACAWS is lucky to live in a community that cares. We're also thrilled to have such experienced and caring staff, lead by a fantastic Executive Director, Ellen Flood. Even now, during COVID-19 ACAWS is here. We will always do our best and remain committed to serving our clients and vulnerable populations. Thank you for your continued support and dedication.



LESLEY FOX
Chairperson of the Board

OUR 2019/20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT	<i>Lesley Fox</i>
VICE-PRESIDENT	<i>Pat Kermeen</i>
TREASURER	<i>Eric Matheson</i>
DIRECTOR	<i>Jeffrey Cook</i>
DIRECTOR	<i>Seva Dhaliwal</i>
DIRECTOR	<i>Samantha Banton-Smith</i>
DIRECTOR	<i>Chris Alemany</i>

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For over 39 years Alberni Community and Women's Services (ACAWS) has been at the forefront of domestic violence services in our region. We do not take for granted that for almost four decades victims and survivors of domestic violence have entrusted their stories, challenges, and successful journeys to ACAWS. We are honored to meet the needs of individuals who deservedly want a life free from violence. This annual report is a snapshot in time as well as a celebration of our organization's impact on the lives of our clients and the communities we serve.

ACAWS was built on the shoulders of strong, determined women who sat at a kitchen table and said *No More* to nonexistent legislation to protect victims and survivors, no safe places to go, and a belief that domestic violence wasn't a priority. When we look back at our history, we realize how fortunate we are that those dynamic women answered the call to action.

Violence against women and girls is a global epidemic. The numbers are staggering; even the often-used statistic that one in three women and girls have experienced physical or sexual violence is a gross under-representation. Here in Port Alberni RCMP statistics for the 1st quarter of 2020 showed a 50% increase in sexual assaults over the same quarter in 2019 and domestic violence reports to RCMP in the same quarter over last year are approximately 30% higher. These numbers speak to a critical problem!

Many do not understand that domestic violence has a ripple effect; that it impacts families, employers, the workplace, the community, and society. ACAWS works to disrupt that ripple through a carefully developed network of support services.

In our work to end violence against women, one of our ongoing challenges is working to change and question the thinking, actions, and systems that contribute to violence against women. Over the past year we continued to grow partnerships, take on new initiatives, and work collaboratively with our community. We remain inspired by our client's strength and resilience in the face of adversity and injustice and going forward will carry on with our work for social and economic justice, peace, and a safe and healthy world in which all are valued, cared for and supported both for their uniqueness and commonality.

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“ ACAWS was built on the shoulders of strong, determined women who sat at a kitchen table and said *No More* to nonexistent legislation to protect victims and survivors, no safe places to go, and a belief that domestic violence wasn't a priority. ”

Sadly, after just over 25 years, through a competitive bidding process, we said farewell to our Sexual Abuse Intervention Program. We also said 'goodbye and good luck' to a few staff, as they moved on to other opportunities. We welcomed new members to our Transition House team and the Stop the Violence Program.

Our Coldest Night of the Year event was the most successful ever. With thanks to our committee led by Carol Hanson just under \$40,000 was raised. This brings our four-year total to an impressive \$104,000. What a team! And we must not forget the Red Hot Chili Peppers, led by Susan Roth who added a little spice to the event with their wonderful chili! Our thanks go out to the sponsors, volunteers, silent auction donors and many participants who have made this event such a great success.

This year, board and staff developed a new strategic plan to continue the path of our history of growth and innovation. Our phenomenal staff and board ensure that we are providing quality programs to the families who need them every day. And as responsible stewards of your investment in this work, we have ended the year financially stable, poised to carry out our strategic plan and deepen our impact in the years to come.

This report could not be written without reference to COVID-19. While our fiscal year ended March 31, 2020 (at the very early stages of the pandemic), we were only beginning to see the effect this pandemic has had on those impacted by domestic violence. Social isolation and distancing have forced women and their children to be restricted to their homes and held indoors. This isolation is causing a perfect storm as there is no escape for many. Violence has been on the upswing and it makes our work that much more important as we move forward into the new year.

They say it takes a village, and that is definitely true in our case. It is only with thanks to our incredible employees, our Board, volunteers, and the ongoing, generous support of government and community funders, foundations, service clubs, businesses and private individuals, who consistently donate money and time, that we are able to continue serving our clients. Thank you for being part of our village and our journey!

ELLEN FROOD
Executive Director





A preliminary concept of the second-stage housing BC Housing has proposed for Port Alberni. (SCREENSHOT)

Supportive housing for women, children to be constructed in Port Alberni

Housing will be operated by Alberni Community and Women's Services Society

ELENA RARDON / Dec. 10, 2019 6:00 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



Port Alberni could benefit from new supportive housing for women and children fleeing violence as soon as 2021.

BC Housing is proposing to build approximately 20 units of second-stage housing on a piece of city-owned land at the intersection of Vimy Street and Rosewood Street. BC Housing, in partnership with the Alberni Community and Woman's Services Society (ACAWS), came to city council on Monday, Dec. 9 asking for a letter of intent.

The province announced a year ago that Port Alberni will be one of 12 communities across B.C. to benefit from new supportive housing for women and children fleeing violence. ACAWS was selected to operate the second-stage housing, which provides safe, short-term housing and supports for women and children after they leave an abusive relationship or situation.

OUR TRANSITION HOUSE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Transition House is core funded for eleven beds by BC Housing. We also gratefully receive donations from service organizations and private citizens.

The Transition House supports women and their children who are At Risk of Violence or have experienced Violence, by providing access to safe, secure and confidential services, including information and supports for decision-making, short-term shelter or housing, referrals to other services and links to affordable housing. All women are eligible for the program services regardless of ethno-cultural background, religious beliefs, physical ability, health, mental wellness, social context, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Women who are referred but do not reside at Transition House are provided initial contact services including an immediate safety assessment, short-term plan for safety, emotional support and referrals to alternative and appropriate resources.

We continue to struggle in our community with the lack of affordable housing, but are very excited for our clients with the announcement of a future second stage housing complex. This will hopefully alleviate homelessness for women in Port Alberni where women are put in unsafe situations of trying to survive. Our stay have risen slightly from last year which shown the continued need of this service in our community. Please find attached a statistic data sheet for the year.

Transition House staff continue to work within the model of Reducing Barriers for women. One change that has occurred this year has been making the Transition House pet friendly so woman can bring their beloved pet with them for comfort and security. This has been a well-received change. The Reduced Barriers model is accomplished with the safety of the house, all clients and staff as an utmost importance. As the end of our year approached, we have all been affected by the Covid -19 pandemic which has put a strain on our program as we are a communal setting. We remain open for the women who need our services and have been working hard at making the needed changes so women and children can continue to be safe while staying at the Transition House. A huge thank you to BC Housing who has been very supportive in this time of crisis; and to our front-line support staff who continue to work each day.

CINDY BLAKE
Manager of Transition House

NUMBERS AT TRANSITION HOUSE



OUR TRANSITION HOUSE 2019/20 ANNUAL STATISTICS

2019/20	BED STAYS	WOMEN BED STAYS	CHILDREN BED STAYS	WOMEN SERVED	NEW WOMEN SERVED	CHILDREN SERVED	NEW CHILDREN SERVED
APRIL	143	132	11	13	10	3	3
MAY	108	77	31	9	6	3	3
JUNE	148	64	84	5	4	6	4
JULY	108	74	34	6	4	4	2
AUGUST	199	103	96	8	7	5	5
SEPTEMBER	258	167	91	16	12	9	4
OCTOBER	133	115	18	15	9	4	-
NOVEMBER	277	117	160	11	8	6	6
DECEMBER	57	38	19	7	5	4	-
JANUARY	184	108	76	9	8	3	3
FEBRUARY	137	102	35	13	9	10	8
MARCH	130	81	49	6	4	7	7
TOTAL	1,882	1,178	704	118	86	64	45

2019/20	ACCEPTED BUT DID NOT SHOW UP		WERE NOT ABLE TO HOUSE		CRISIS PHONE CALLS	FULL HOUSE NIGHTS
	WOMEN	CHILDREN	WOMEN	CHILDREN		
APRIL	4	-	18	5	16	-
MAY	6	5	8	6	9	-
JUNE	1	-	14	14	10	2
JULY	6	4	12	6	10	-
AUGUST	7	4	21	10	13	-
SEPTEMBER	10	-	25	11	18	17
OCTOBER	-	-	15	3	19	1
NOVEMBER	7	15	21	22	15	12
DECEMBER	3	1	13	8	10	-
JANUARY	3	2	17	10	12	4
FEBRUARY	8	9	17	11	17	-
MARCH	7	3	16	7	11	2
TOTAL	62	43	197	108	160	38



WOMEN AND CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION

Violence against women is an important issue that impacts individuals, families and society as a whole. It also acts as a barrier to gender equality in Canada and around the world.

1. 2014 OVER 1.2 MILLION VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION INCIDENTS self-reported* by women

Violent victimizations include sexual assault, robbery and physical assault.



this represents **56%** of all violent incidents



2. 2015 88.2% OF SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS ARE FEMALE

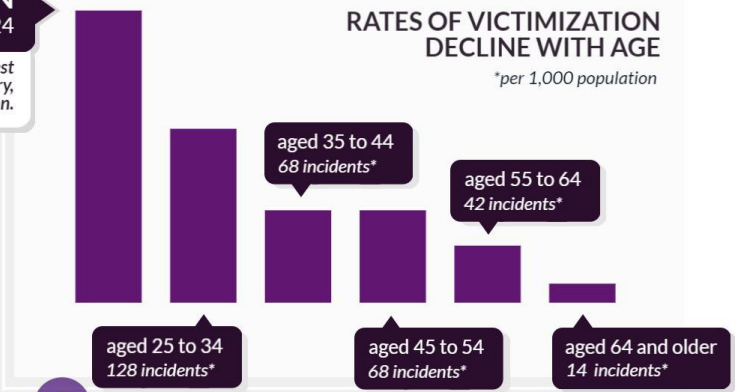
*The two primary sources of data are police-reported crime data, and self-reported victimization. Self-reported incidents may not have come to the attention of the police and were collected through the General Social Survey on Canadians' safety.

3. RISK FACTORS

Violence can affect anyone, but some factors can put individuals at higher risk of being victimized.

4. YOUNG WOMEN aged 15 to 24

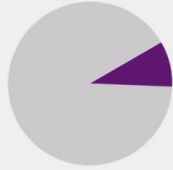
Violent victimization was the highest among young women in this age category, with 215 incidents per 1,000 population.



5. INDIGENOUS WOMEN

experienced violence at a rate 2.7 times higher than non-Indigenous women in 2014.

1980



9% of all female homicide victims were Indigenous

2015



24% of all female homicide victims were Indigenous

6. LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN

experienced violence at more than twice the rate reported by gay and bisexual men in 2014.



These highlights were taken from the "Women in the Criminal Justice System" chapter of the 7th edition of *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report*.

Stopping the Violence (STV) Program

The Stopping the Violence Counselling Program provides individual and/or group counselling for women who have experienced violence/abuse in relationships.

The program offers individual and group support for women who have been impacted by abuse and/or violence. This includes historical abuse and sexual assault. Provided from a woman-centered, trauma-informed, feminist perspective and within an accessible, safe, and supportive environment, the STV model is to offer supportive counselling based on respectful relationships.

We believe women are experts in their own lives. Program services are delivered in a manner that respects each woman's individual rights, safety and human dignity, regardless of economic status, gender, age, race, cultural or ethnic origins, physical or mental ability, or sexuality.

Over the past year, in partnership with the Port Alberni Friendship Centre and INEO, the STV program delivered three Rebuilding Lives groups to a total of 35 women. The seven natural laws and sharing that form the foundation of the Aboriginal way of all life, are built around the sacred teachings (wisdom, love, respect, courage, honesty, humility, and truth) in this program. Often fear prevents women from coming forward when they need help. This program helps women work toward breaking the cycle of violence...it teaches a way of living and being honest to yourself and others, a time for self-reflection and getting back to your values...basically it is courage in the face of fear. The experiential backgrounds of the clients and varied experiences of abuse are reflected in this program. Offering groups such as this is an important part of STV program delivery.

There were some challenges in staffing STV over the past year as ACAWS was filling a temporary vacancy for a staff member off on leave. But we were fortunate to have some very talented people in the program throughout the year who worked with great professionalism to continue providing services to our clients. Because of the temporary nature of the position, three of the counsellors moved on to other opportunities. We are thankful for the assistance of Sarah Henshall (Community Based Victim Services Coordinator) who stepped in to give a hand in delivering the Rebuilding Lives group. We are however so pleased to say the STV program is now staffed on a full-time permanent basis by Gayle Maddocks. Formerly with our SAIP program, Gayle has rejoined the team in her new role as STV counsellor.

280

COUNSELLING
SESSIONS
FOR WOMEN

142

WOMEN
REFERRED TO
PROGRAM

32

UNSCHEDULED
COUNSELLING
SESSIONS

29

TELEPHONE
COUNSELLING
SESSIONS

**Written on behalf of
BEVERLY MENNIE, KERRY ERICKSON, PAYTON HETHERINGTON, AND GAYLE MADDOCKS**
Stopping the Violence Counsellors

“...Here in Port Alberni RCMP statistics for the 1st quarter of 2020 showed a 50% increase in sexual assaults over the same quarter in 2019 and domestic violence reports to RCMP in the same quarter over last year are approximately 30% higher. These numbers speak to a critical problem!”

ELLEN FROOD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

The P.E.A.C.E. Program

The PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment) program provides individual and group counselling for children and youth ages 3 to 18 that have experienced violence and abuse in their home. Our PEACE Program Counsellor uses a psycho-educational approach in their work by offering to:

- Support children and youth to feel safe, respected, and heard
- Support children/youth and parents/caregivers to develop healthy and respectful ways of rebuilding their lives together
- Identifying their support system and develop a safety plan
- Help children and youth understand and manage their emotions
- To foster hope by reminding children and youth of their strengths and abilities, and how resilient they are from past adversities
- To provide outreach in schools focused on violence awareness and prevention
- To develop an understanding of violence against women and girls

In January 2020 we were elated to finally reach our goal of adding children's groups to our programming and began preparing for our first group of 8 children for March. The children's group was scheduled for nine weeks. The PEACE Program staff delivered three sessions in our children's group which was very well received by the children. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 we had to end our group sessions. Our future goals are to offer more children's groups per year as it reduces our waitlist timelines. This past year we observed the number of clients who have reentered into our program rose considerably. Some families withdrew from program because they had to move due to lack of affordable housing in Port Alberni. The PEACE Program referrals have been steady and are reflective of the domestic violence incidents reported (many unreported) in Port Alberni.

Individual and group counselling energy was flowing well in the program until our lives became upended by the Covid-19 pandemic which halted us from continuing our face-to-face work in the office. We quickly moved to phone call check-ins and prepared self-care packages and delivered them to the children to work on at home. Staff has also provided parental support for managing issues at home with their children. There have been many conversations about how we move forward during this time of uncertainty. However, we are focused on the continuous support for our clients and families. How we serve our clients may look different, but we are still there doing the work to offer our assistance to ensure that the safety and needs of our PEACE Program clients are met.

217

children & youth received
individual services

104

children participated in our
school program

625

children & youth in our
region received PEACE
program services

BRENDA WAINWRIGHT
P.E.A.C.E. Program Counsellor

Women & Youth Outreach Programs

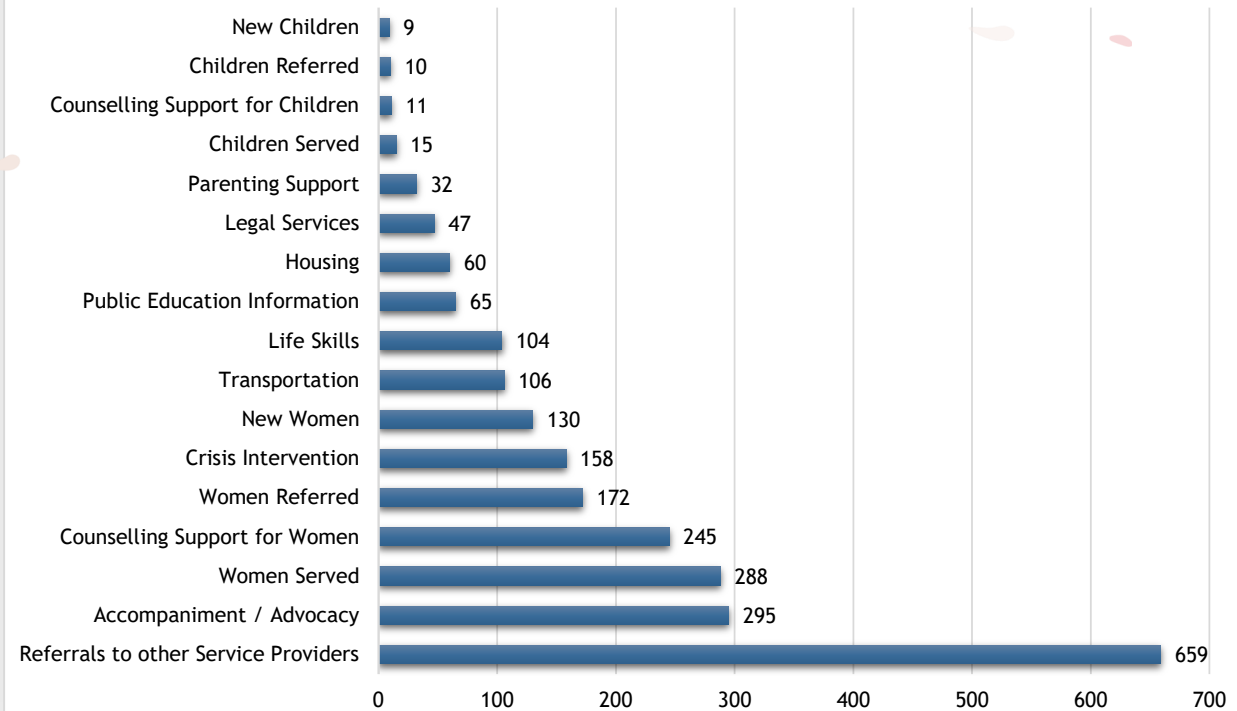
Courageous, resilient, strong and brave are just a few words that describe the women we have worked with in outreach this year! Each woman we have worked with has brought her own unique experiences and personal stories of how violence and abuse has affected her and her life. In this fiscal year we have seen that every woman has experienced psychological, emotional or verbal abuse, many of whom didn't realize it was abuse, or held beliefs it was just a "normal part" of a relationship. Many women have also experienced physical abuse, where her abuser has assaulted her, harmed her animals, alienated her from her children, locked her outside of her house, threatened to kill her and more. We have seen this year an increase of woman struggling in family court to get custody of her children or even visitation rights. We have seen a large percentage of women we worked with this year who are survivors of childhood abuse and sexual abuse. As well, we saw an increase of women who had been with her abuser over a long period of time, successfully leave after being connected with the right resources and support. Unfortunately, even after leaving the abuser, we see that some still experiencing abuse. One woman said, "When I first left him I felt I jumped out of a frying pan, but then realized I just jumped into a fire."

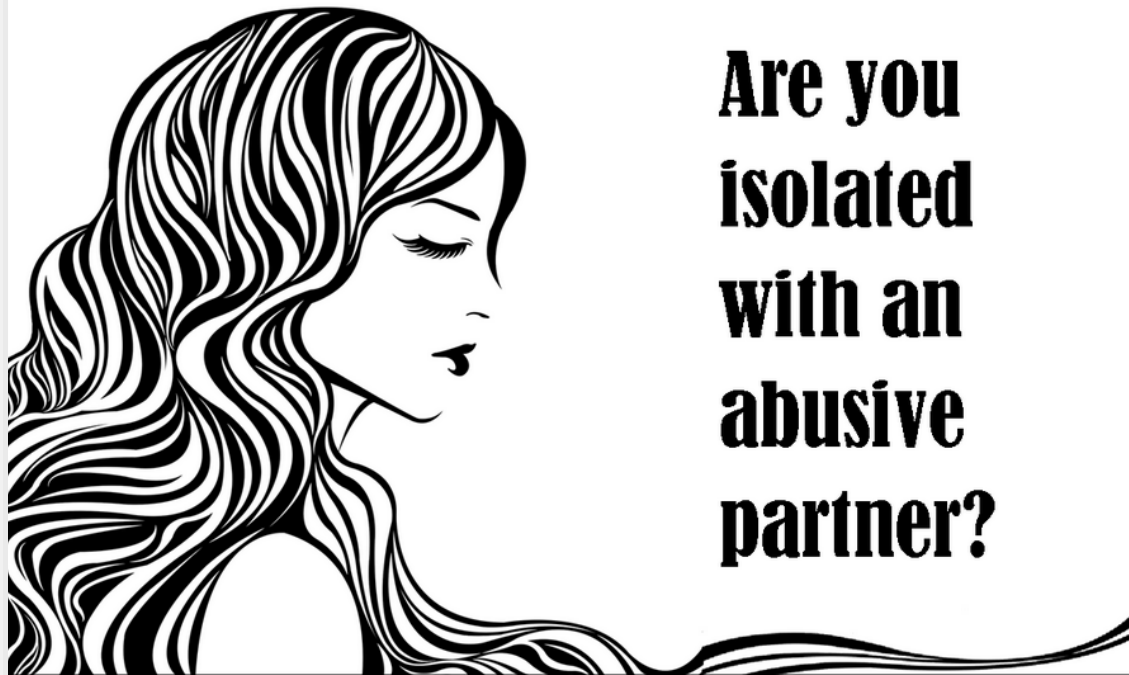
We have been very busy this year in Outreach, spending lots of time walking along side women and supporting their healing journey, recognizing and emphasizing that each woman is the expert of her own life. Much time has also been spent collaborating with other organizations and service providers to ensure we can best support the dynamic needs of women and children who are experiencing violence and abuse in the Port Alberni Valley. As well, we have taken part in many professional development and educational trainings. It is to be noted, that the statistics this year do not properly address the amount of work we have done with women and children in outreach.

Wow! This year we have also worked with so many amazing youth, who all have unique personalities, interests, hobbies, talents, strengths and voices, but whom all have experienced abuse, sexual assault or violence at home. For many of these youth we work with, school is their one safe place, so being able to support them, put on workshops and continuing to develop trusting relationships at Eight Avenue Learning Centre and at ADSS, is wonderful. This year, we have seen an increase in youth who are questioning their gender, are using substance to cope with their trauma and who are experiencing dating violence. The youth we work with are very much effected by their experiences of abuse, but many have developed healthy coping skills, such as drawing, playing music, becoming expert video gamer, spending time with animals and getting outside. As always, it is such an honor to be working with the amazing youth of Port Alberni.



2019/20 ADULT OUTREACH STATISTICS





Are you isolated with an abusive partner?

We can help you. We are here to talk with you, provide emotional support, and help you create an effective safety plan. We can also provide a safe place to stay. **Please call or e-mail us at patransitionhouse@acaws.ca**



Alberni Community and
Women's Services Society

TRANSITION HOUSE
Call 250.724.2223
Text 250.206.1011



OUR PROGRAMS FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Community-Based Victim Services

Community Based Victim Services (CBVS) provides emotional support, practical assistance, general as well as justice-related information to women, men, youth and children in the Alberni Valley and Bamfield who are victims of intimate crimes. Intimate crimes include violence in relationships, adult, child and youth sexual assault, sexual abuse, historical sexual abuse and criminal harassment (i.e. threats, stalking). The funding for this program is provided by the Ministry of Justice.

Four objectives:

- Lessen the impact of crime and trauma on victims and assist in their recovery
- Increase victim safety and help reduce the risk of further victimization
- Increase the sense of empowerment when engaging in the criminal justice system
- Increase the effectiveness of victims while acting as a witness during court proceedings

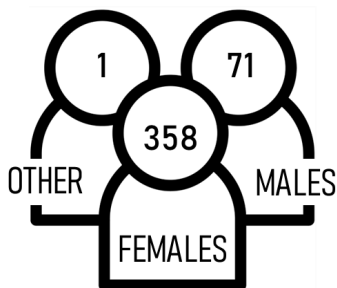
CBVS provides transportation to court and other related meetings and appointments, facilitates court orientations and trial preparation, accompanies victims to interviews with the RCMP and judicial hearings, updates victims of the status of investigations, assists with forms such as Protection orders, Victim Impact statements, and Crime Victim Assistance applications, promoting safety plans and referring victims to other programs and agencies for continued support.

Program Statistics

From April 2019 to March 2020, the CBVS program received 430 new client referrals, along with 275 general inquiries or brief service contacts. Of those client referrals, 308 of those resulted in referrals to the CBVS program because of family violence.

The summer posed to be the busiest on record with new referrals doubling. Historical sexual assault files decreased over the past year whereas K-files (domestic violence) doubled as did sexual assaults.

Some of the challenges are with a lack of services for male adult victims. Due to long wait times with Crime Victim Assistance acceptance, I can often only get Indigenous males and females into community counselling expeditiously under FNHA or NTC prior to being accepted through CVAP. The steady referrals to the CBVS has sometimes resulted in direct client service being made a priority over other tasks like paperwork.

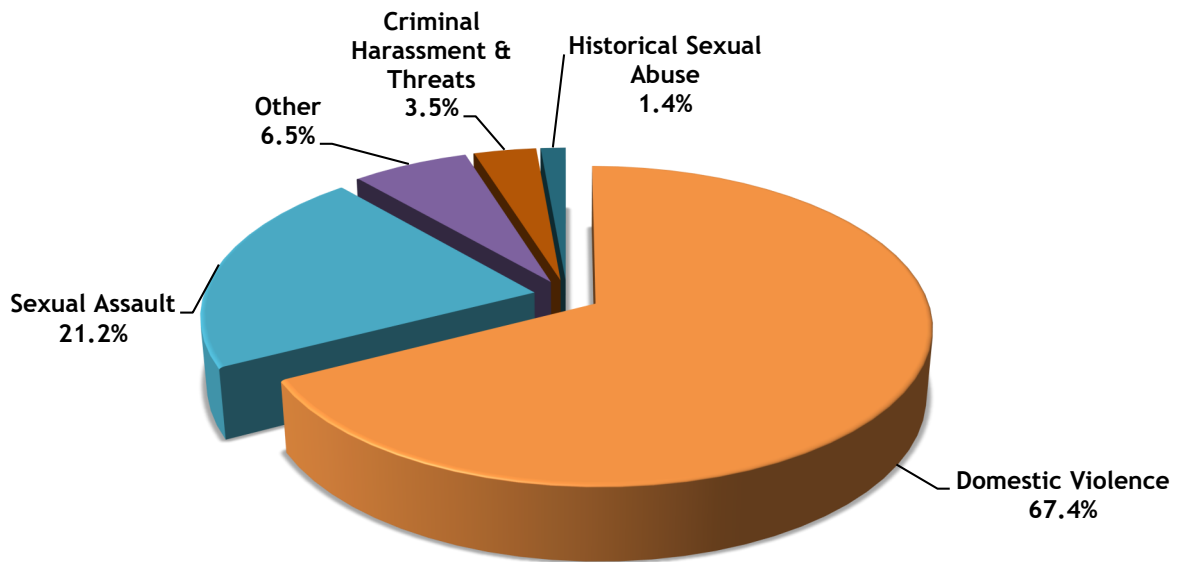


“...the responsibility lies with each and every one of us to create—or at times defend—the right for individuals of all backgrounds to be safe.”

ELLEN FROOD, Executive Director



REFERRALS BY THE TYPE OF OFFENSE



NUMBER OF REFERRALS BY TYPE OF OFFENSE

Domestic Violence	290
Sexual Assault	91
Other	28
Criminal Harassment & Threats	15
Historical Sexual Abuse	6
TOTAL	430

Program Summary:

During the 2019-2020, Community Based Victim Services has been full of activity. I have attended the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault meetings with our judicial partners, the Court User meeting and have attended several training opportunities. I attended 3rd Party Reporting Protocols Workshop, have hosted several information tables, attended EVA BC Conference in November and was the Facilitator of the 8 week Rebuilding Lives Program for women hosted at ACAWS, Port Alberni Friendship Centre and INEO. I also was invited by the BC Lions to speak at the local high school as part of the “Be More Than a Bystander” program.

This is my sixth year with ACAWS and in the role of CBVS coordinator for 1 ½ years, and I very much look forward to additional years working with such great and dedicated colleagues.

SARAH HENSHALL
Victim Services Worker

Our Resource Center

In our Drop-in Centre we have the opportunity to work with a diverse set of individuals from all walks of life. On any given month, we assist, on average, about 360 visits, helping people in various ways and had 4,347 visits last year alone. Some people come to us in distress and in need of immediate assistance, some people come to us looking for ways to heal and grow stronger, some people come to us to asking for help with obtaining basic hygiene and personal care items and then others come to us to find community and friend support, from staff as well as other clients who challenge and rely on one another.

The one thing everyone who comes to see us has in common is that they find the Drop-in Centre to be a safe and welcoming environment where people can find comfort in knowing that they will be listened to, supported and will have opportunities to learn and grow. We offer sessions for hands on sewing projects and Knitting, we offer free Reiki treatments with a trained Reiki expert. We assist with building resumes, filling out forms, and even support ongoing education for those adult learners who are working toward getting their GED Highschool diploma. We are a place where people feel that they have a hand in molding and creating a safe and inclusive environment.

One incident which exemplifies our safe environment is when we had a frequent client come to us for help when they felt there was nowhere else that they could go for assistance. This client had been struggling with substance abuse in the past, largely due to childhood trauma and abuse, and after a long stretch of sobriety, had made a mistake and decided to use again. This client took a dose of narcotic only to realize that it was laced with deadly fentanyl and they were in fact starting to overdose. They came to us and we identified that they needed immediate medical assistance and they were administered Naloxone to reverse the overdose until the ambulance arrived. I am happy we were here that day to help save the life of a wonderful person and continue to watch this individual grow stronger in their focus and journey on a positive path.

We are a necessary and vital resource for the community and residents of this area, who are otherwise left without the services we offer. The funding we receive through the BC Gaming Commission is what allows us to help those in need to work toward a better tomorrow and to maintain the humanity and dignity we all deserve. We could not provide this service if it were not for the generous and kind monetary support, we receive from BC Gaming.

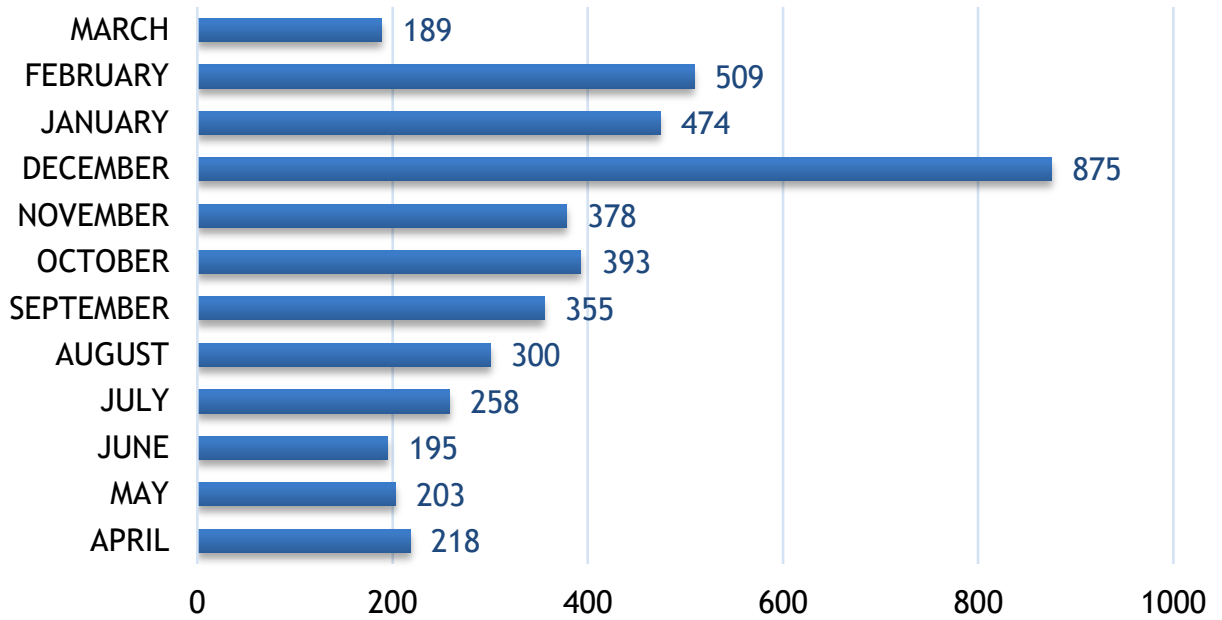
Not everyone leads the same life and many people have suffered at the hands of others, in both childhood and adulthood, we understand that not everyone is on the same path at the same time which is why our Drop-in offers safe and clean Harm Reduction supplies which allow people to mitigate the damage which could completely destroy any future opportunities for recovery. When we offer Harm Reduction supplies, we know that even if someone isn't ready to end their addiction today, they will have the chance at a tomorrow to make a positive change.

The recent global shutdown and "New Normal" has challenged us to come up with new and innovative ways to access our clients. The previous rapport and relationships which were built, have allowed us to stay connected virtually with clients. In addition and while following social distancing and health requirements, we have been able to safely go out into the community and remain connected by dropping of care packages and share in celebrating the good times as well, we delivered Easter treats, pet food and purses full of goodies on different occasions as a way of strengthening bonds and retaining the important human connection. It was heartwarming to be part of that and to see that many of our clients were so happy to see us, that they sometimes didn't even notice the gifts until we pointed them out.

Our Drop-in is supportive and full of life, respectful and fun, as well as a safe place to be oneself, and learn and engage with the community around us. Together staff and clients help to form a rich tapestry of life and excitement which we all have a hand in holding up to support one another.

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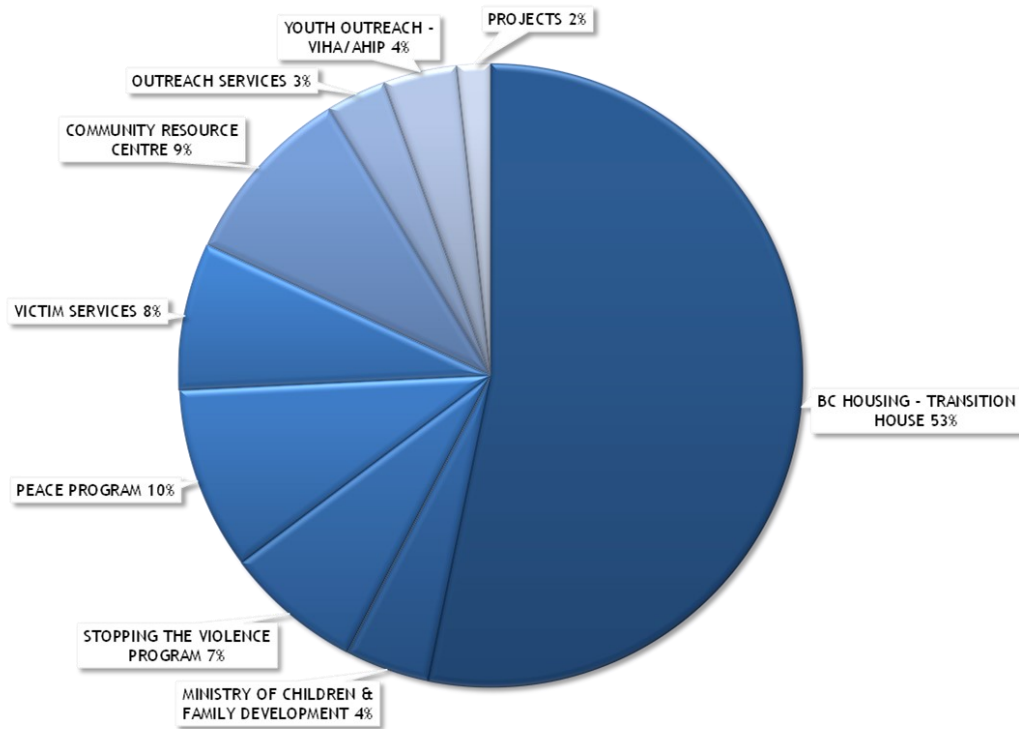
NUMBER OF CLIENTS PER MONTH



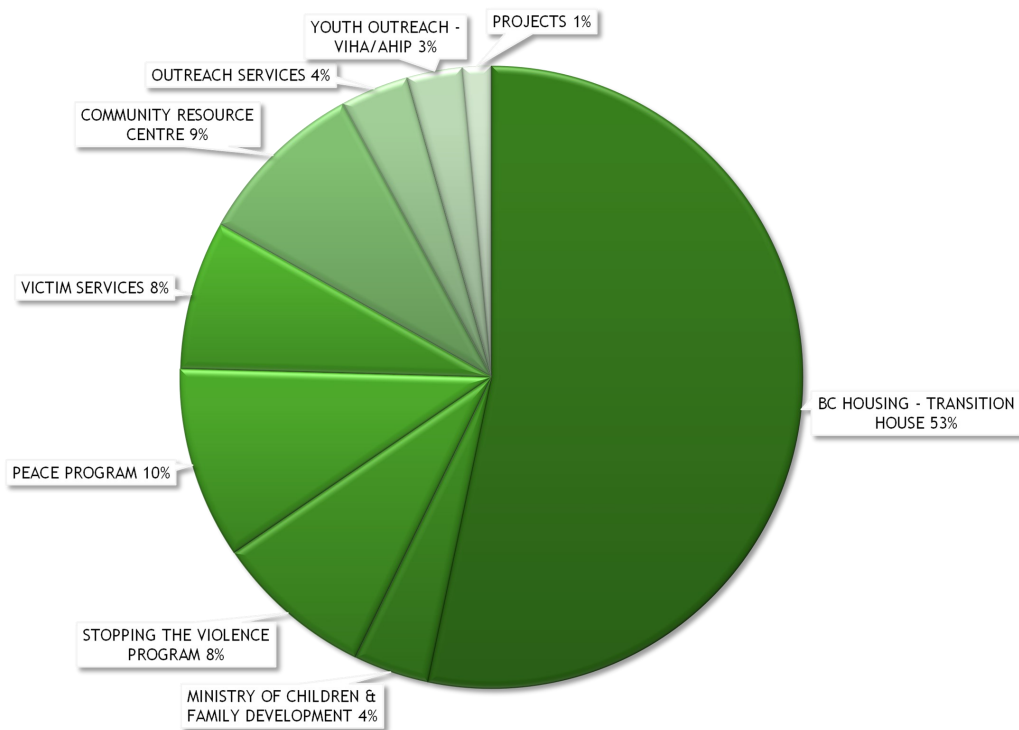
HARRENA GILLIS
Resource Centre Co-ordinator

OUR NUMBERS

2019/2020 REVENUE



2019/2020 EXPENSE



SUSAN ROTH
 Manager of Finance and Administration

OUR FUNDRAISING COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR



Teams prepare for the Coldest Night of the Year

ELENA RARDON
Alberni Valley News

This year's Coldest Night of the Year event in Port Alberni will be dedicated to the memory of a well-known community leader.

Alberni Community and Women's Service Society (ACAWS) will be partnering with the Port Alberni Port Authority to dedicate the 2020 Coldest Night of the Year to Gillian Trumper. Trumper, a former mayor and MLA, passed away in 2019 after complications from renal failure. Trumper was also on the board of directors with ACAWS.

"She was very instrumental in a time of change for us," explained ACAWS executive director Ellen Flood, adding that Trumper was able to initiate discussions about the second-stage housing that will soon be built in Port Alberni for women and children fleeing violence.

"But it's not just because of ACAWS," Flood added. "There are many, many reasons why we're honouring her. She made a huge difference in the lives of people in the Alberni Valley. We thought it would be nice to dedicate the event to her this year."

Coldest Night of the Year is a family-friendly walk that raises money for charities serving the hungry, homeless and hurting. This year, ACAWS hopes to raise \$30,000, all of which will stay locally in Port Alberni. Last year's event fell just short of its goal of \$25,000, but Flood is optimistic about this year.

"I'm pretty sure we're going to



Slide and the Family Stone (made up of Alberni Valley Curling Club members) poses for a photo before the start of the Coldest Night of the Year in 2019. (NEWS FILE PHOTO)

make our goal," she said. "We'd actually like to exceed our goal."

The Coldest Night of the Year will take place on Saturday, Feb. 22, starting at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 293 at Victoria Quay.

"It's not intended to be a run," said Flood. "You can come out with your family and friends and have a little fun."

The route will be different from previous years, starting and finishing at the Royal Canadian Legion on Victoria Quay. Walkers will travel down Victoria Quay to the Stamp Avenue and Roger Street intersection, then walk back to Johnston Road, up to the Tim Hortons and Buy-Low Foods intersection, where they will cross the street and return to the Legion. A lengthier 10-kilometre route is also available. All routes will be marked with signage, be staffed by volunteers and include rest stops with snacks.

At the end of the night, walkers

can return to the Legion for some complimentary chili served by the "Red Hot Chili Peppers."

"It's just a nice event to get out and go for a walk," said Flood.

Registration opens at 2 p.m. on Saturday. Opening ceremonies start at 3 p.m. and the walk begins at 3:15 p.m. Registration closes and meal service begins at 4 p.m.

There will be special prizes for fundraisers, including a prize for the "Best Dressed" team of the night.

Flood emphasized that people can still participate even if they aren't able to attend in person.

"You can still support somebody that is participating," she explained.

Donate to a team or a walker by visiting cnoy.org and searching for Port Alberni. Or you can call Carol at ACAWS (250-724-7111 ext. 221) to find out how to get involved.



Coldest Night in Port Alberni

SUSIE QUINN & MIKE YOUDS
Alberni Valley News

Organizers of the annual Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser were "ecstatic" Saturday with a large turnout and their most successful campaign yet, raising more than \$33,000 for the city's homeless, hungry and hurting.

About 120 people took part in the fourth annual walk, dedicated to the late Gillian Trumper, a former mayor and board member of event host Alberni Women's Services.

"It is a true tribute to her," said Ellen Froot, director of Alberni Community and Women's Society.

Walkers started at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 293's building at Victoria Quay, and walked one of three routes varying in length. The Red Hot Chili Peppers pro-

vided chili once the walk started, and members of the Kinsmen and Kinettes were at the Legion prior to the start of the walk with food and coffee too.

Students in Mme. Joy Couttenier's Grade 4/5 class at École Alberni Elementary held a Coldest Day of the Year walk on Thursday, Feb. 20 from the school to Kitsuksis Dyke and back. Students raised a total of \$445.

Student Eliana Berenguer raised the most of all the students, donating \$150.

"I raised \$150," she said, adding that family and friends helped her raise that total.

Berenguer and her classmates brought "Coldest Day" bookmarks on their walk to hand out to anyone they met along the way.



More than 120 walkers showed up for the Coldest Night of the Year event Saturday night (Feb. 22, 2020) in Port Alberni, raising a record \$33,000 for ACAWS. (MIKE YOUDS/ Special to the News)



Eliana Berenguer, centre, and her École Alberni Elementary classmates Mila Courtney, left, Chloe Leprette and Grace Martin pause from their Coldest Day of the Year walk around Kitsuksis Dyke on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. The class raised \$445 for the annual event. (SUSAN QUINN/ Alberni Valley News)



Madame Joy Couttenier, left, leads her Grade 4/5 class from École Alberni Elementary on a Coldest Day of the Year walk from the school to Kitsuksis Dyke and back on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. (SUSAN QUINN/ Alberni Valley News)



Walkers of all ages participated in the Coldest Night of the Year. (MIKE YOUDS/ Special to the News)

“ We walk humbly realizing that anyone can lose their footing and then lose everything else. ”



CAROL HANSON

Administrative Assistant, Volunteer & Program Co-ordinator

*Thank
you*

During the 2019/20 fiscal year, we received funding for our programs from the following BC government sources:

- British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing)
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Community Gaming Grants Branch
- Vancouver Island Health Authority