

GRANDE PRAIRIE WOMEN'S RESIDENCE ASSOCIATION

# ODYSSEY HOUSE

ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022

## EQUALITY & EMPOWERMENT

Our vision is to help individuals break free from the cycle of violence.

Everyone has the right to live with dignity, safety, and equality.

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Charitable Registration #129126462RR0001



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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In the last year, Odyssey House and our community have experienced unprecedented and difficult times. Over a year ago, a provincial and worldwide shutdown gave us at Odyssey House a pause to consider how we continue to provide essential services to individuals experiencing violence and abuse in a manner that would provide for their safety as well as their physical and mental health wellbeing.

As COVID-19 has changed the world, it has certainly changed how many of us do things. The Odyssey House staff are resilient and committed and worked to find innovative ways to encourage and support women who reached out to us. We were and remain committed to keeping our doors open and all of our services accessible to serve all individuals who are navigating the effects of violence and who need our support. Our shelter and services remain available with enhanced infection and prevention policies and controls; all implemented to do our best to provide a healthy environment where our individuals can be supported, and our staff can work. Sadly many people have been isolated through the pandemic, unable to access services.

Now that our province and community have moved through the re-opening phases and restrictions are lifted, fewer barriers are in place that may have prevented individuals from reaching out due to COVID-19. However, individuals fleeing the violence and abuse in their lives have always faced the fears of leaving the situation, the lack of system supports and opportunities for themselves and their children.

Odyssey House is committed to providing encouragement, crisis intervention, support, and information to assist individuals on their journey to a more peaceful and deserving life. We do this work with the help of our excellent staff who are truly Pandemic Heroes, with our volunteer Board of Directors who remain committed and supportive of our efforts and with the help of an amazing community who have demonstrated a level of support for which we are profoundly grateful. On behalf of all of the individuals we serve, we thank you.



**LISA WATSON**

Executive Director



**MIKE ANDERSON**

Board President

## OUR 2021-2022 VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**MIKE ANDERSON**  
PRESIDENT

**JENNA CANAVAN**  
VICE PRESIDENT

**SHAWN PENNY**  
TREASURER

**BREIANNE RENYK**  
DIRECTOR

**KRISTA UMBLE**  
DIRECTOR

**STACY GREENING**  
DIRECTOR

**AMY DIAZ**  
DIRECTOR

**JASON SMITH**  
DIRECTOR

**JENNY WEAVER**  
DIRECTOR

**CLIFF TURNER**  
HONOURARY DIRECTOR

# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH PILLARS

The organizational pillars help Odyssey House balance strategy and actions and ultimately reflect the most critical aspects of our organization's ongoing health and sustainability. Our annual planning and intentional work throughout the organization encompass these pillars and the desired outcomes.



## OUR VALUES

### TRAUMA INFORMED

#### **Safety**

Ensuring emotional and physical safety

#### **Choice**

Everyone has ability to influence their environment

#### **Collaboration**

Making decisions together and sharing power

#### **Empowerment**

Continuing to grow trust in self

#### **Professionalism**

Task clarity, consistency, and interpersonal relationships

# EMERGENCY SHELTER

**The Emergency Shelter program supported 194 women and 171 children.**

**The crisis line received over 2300 calls for support and services.**

Odyssey House supports a 42-bed private, secure, welcoming facility for women and children needing short-term emergency accommodation. Our shelter offers:

- 14 bedrooms (42 beds)
- Staff specialized in crisis intervention and safety planning
- Free on-site laundry
- Hot meals and snacks
- Clothing
- Recreational and private spaces
- Support groups
- Respite Childcare and After School programs
- Accessible facility
- Pets welcome



## 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- Introduction of text function to Crisis Line service.
- Implemented and maintained all Alberta Health Services HS Covid-19 safety procedures.
- Actively supported residents while ill and in isolation, meeting needs and ensuring recovery.
- Became a community partner in the Housing and Homelessness **HUB table** to collaborate with other social service agencies to provide housing options to individuals and families.
- Worked in partnership with Christian Fellowship Assembly to provide a Holiday Appreciation Tea for residents.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial shutdown, Odyssey House would see and support women, with or without children, over our funding capacity because that was the need for services. As the provincial shutdown occurred and stay-at-home orders took place, women experiencing violence and abuse became even more trapped in their situations, feeling helpless and without support, with stronger fears of asking for help. Our service statistics demonstrate this fear and uncertainty of accessing support. Odyssey House continues to encourage women to seek the help they need, and we have seen an increase in women reaching out as the province and services have gone through re-opening stages over the last year. As an essential service, we will continue to assess and adjust how best we can provide crucial services for women and their children safely and effectively.

# PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Provided presentations and public engagement sessions to over 5500 individuals.**

Our Public Education Program is designed to increase awareness of the social issues related to family and gender-based violence through education, support, referrals, and advocacy. We also have custom presentations for schools, colleges, community groups, summer camps, businesses, and non-profit agencies. Odyssey House is active in upper elementary, as well as Junior and Senior high in the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, and our rural communities. A few examples of our presentations are:

## Community

- Domestic Violence-It's Your Buisness
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Healthy, Unhealthy, & Abusive Relationships
- Understanding Trauma
- Leading Change: Inspired Communities

## School

- Healthy Friendships
- Expressing Healthy Emotions
- Health Self-Esteem
- Bullying and Harassment
- Healthy Peer Relationships



## 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- Attended **48** public engagement sessions, such as trade shows, conventions, and community events.
- Formed **291** new partnerships and actively engaged with **244** established partnerships.
- Completed **293** school & youth presentations with a total participant attendance of **4091** youth.
- Completed **22** community presentations with a total participant attendance of **216** people.
- Provided **Critical Incident Stress Management** training to **5** local social servicing agencies.
- Supported **72** volunteers through the **Respond Volunteer Program** to provide **1084** hours of support to our programs and services.
- The Public Education Team provided media, communications and engagement supports to the development of Odyssey House's newest fundraiser **GrandeCon** scheduled for July 2022.
- Joined working groups to support Women's Influence Awards, Prevention of Family Violence Month, Provincial IMPACT Collective, North Pole Party, Alberta Primary Prevention Strategy, Grande Prairie Local Immigration Partnership, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters Director Network and the Local IMPACT GP Leadership Team.

***"I joined Odyssey House to help with childcare as a volunteer. I feel like I have learned so much about the effects of domestic violence on children and how we, as childcare workers, can assist with their healing journey. It also makes me feel good to help purposefully and that I am making a difference."***

**Relief Childcare Volunteer**

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND OUTREACH

**Community Support facilitated 77 support groups attended by 454 people.**

**Provided 891 hours of trauma counseling to 118 women and 19 children**

Odyssey House is more than just a bed; accessing our services does not only mean accessing the emergency shelter program. Our Community Support Team provides 1:1 support to all, regardless of identified gender, background, or socioeconomic status, who have already left, need assistance navigating resources, or are still struggling with an unhealthy or abusive relationship. A Community Support worker can assist with danger assessments, safety planning, housing, court support, income support, and walks with individuals to achieve set goals and move forward in their healing journey. Support groups are also provided three times per week.



## 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- Create and implement online groups. This allowed for no gaps in service delivery during the pandemic.
- partnership with Grande Prairie Public Library to provide craft packages to be dropped off during the community social distancing period.
- **Western Cree Tribal Council** collaboration to create cultural services and develop the First Nations Community Support position.
- Self Defense classes provided by **Gladiators Gym** to individuals accessing services.
- Enhanced partnership with **Family Education Society** providing the Rainbows Greif & Loss Program, referrals, training space, training opportunities, information sharing and case conferencing.
- Provided Community Supports and groups to rural residents in Beaverlodge and Valleyview.
- Provided Community Supports and peer support groups to rural residents in Beaverlodge and Valleyview.
- Partnership with **Alberta Health Services** to launch the **Domestic Abuse Response Team** to offer specialized support to patients of all genders who are experiencing any form of domestic violence in Grande Prairie and 10 rural communities.
- Developed a **Housing Loss Prevention** program for individuals accessing services who were effected by COVID and are at risk of losing their housing.

# CHILDCARE SUPPORT

**Our three childcare programs served a total of 148 children and provided a total of 12,444 hours of trauma informed programming to children accessing our programs.**

**Child care** is available to individuals staying at the Emergency Shelter or Second-Stage shelter, accessing groups, other programming, or seeking support from the Outreach team. We are also here to support all parents. We are available to listen and work with parents regarding any concerns or questions you may have. We will work with you and your family to help you strengthen bonds and create structure and routines within a positive and supportive environment. We provide respite care for mothers so they can attend appointments and meetings or those who need a break.

## **Out-of-School Care**

The Odyssey House Out of School Care program has been developed for school-aged children (5 to 18). The program is open to those staying in the shelter, those who have stayed in the shelter in the past, or accessing the outreach team.



## 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- Our childcare staff were trained in the Rainbows Greif & Loss Program; Children of Trauma; Being Trauma aware; ASIST; Danger Assessment Training; Anxiety Practical Intervention Strategies; and Autism Strategies for Self-Regulation.
- Childcare programs in both shelters provided regular outings into the community allowing children to gain firsthand knowledge of their world and learn about their surroundings and their role in it.
- **Circle of Courage Philosophy Implemented.** The Circle of Courage is a model of positive child and youth development. The model integrates indigenous philosophies of child-rearing and contemporary resilience research.
- **Continued childcare service during the pandemic. Serenity Place Daycare** alone served 16 children with 1244 visits for a total number of hours of programming of 9040.75 hours.

### **2021 ADOPT A FAMILY PROGRAM**

Through your generosity we supported **92** families in enjoying hand picked presents and a holiday meal. Thank you for making the holiday season special!

# SERENITY PLACE, SECOND STAGE SHELTER

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**Our second-stage program supported 16 women and 19 children.**

Tragically, freedom from violence is a long road. A few weeks in a shelter isn't enough to heal the scars of abuse or to lay a foundation for an independent life. With that in mind, we built a Transitional Supportive Second-Stage Shelter, Serenity Place, a new 14-unit apartment building to meet that more significant need. We offer 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom apartments with the help of our 'flex units.' Each apartment is fully furnished with all the necessities, from furniture, bedding, dishes, etc. Power, heat, and water are included in the rent, and pets are allowed. Rent is based on the Alberta Works Core Funding for Shelter or 30% of their income. We have two highly trained, caring support workers to assist with attaining personal goals and client support.



## 2021/2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- Vacant suites provided a safe and comfortable space for families to isolate when needed.
- Gather 13 community social serving agencies to participate in the **Blueprint project**. The Blueprint project seeks to build on the inventory of promising practices {i.e., cross-sectoral collaboration, risk assessment, safety planning and screening, intersectional policies, service provision, and wraparound supportive responses for women} to develop a practical Blueprint and provide support and enhance the intersectionality of the assessment tools, especially for indigenous women, refugees, immigrant women, and LGBTQ so that communities can implement promising and proven practices in addressing Domestic Violence.
- **Project Impact** completed. Following the traditions of participatory evaluation, Project Impact aimed to see what kind and quality of impact Odyssey House's emergency shelter has on our residents and how we are best serving them. We received feedback from over 20 women, and this report is published on the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters webpage.

***"Since I've been here, I've learned a lot about what it means to love myself again and not be afraid to be alone and to be a single mother the workers here are so amazing. I'm blessed to be here and have them in my life."***  
**Serenity Place Resident**

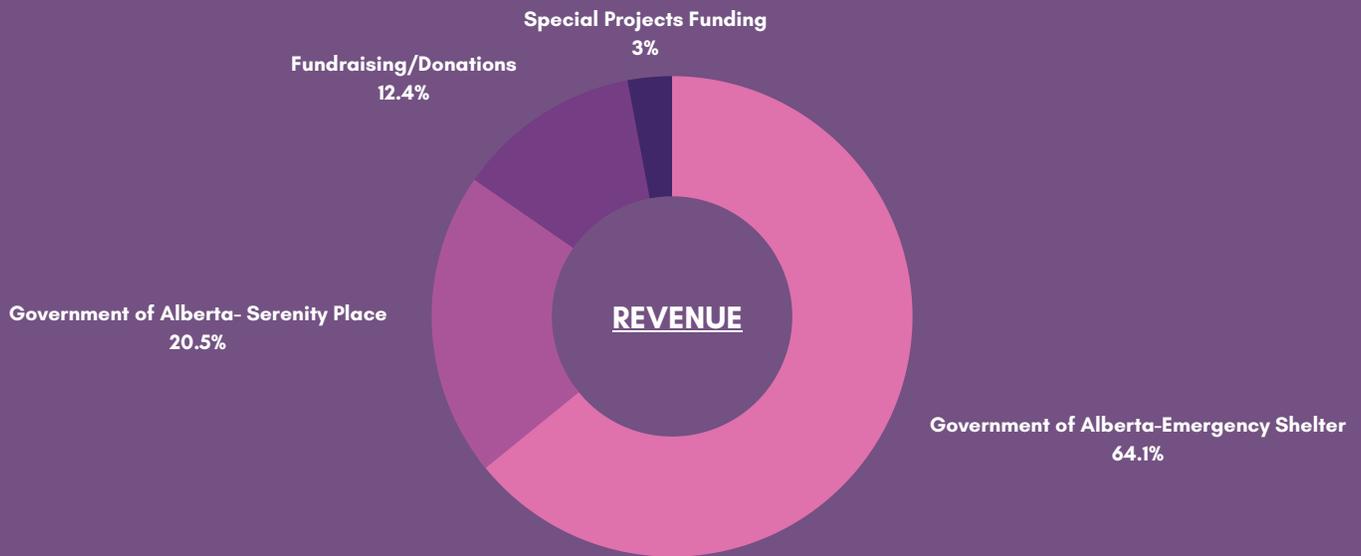
# OUR COMMUNITY, OUR HEALING HEROS

This past year has been a time of incredible generosity from our community. Calls of support asking how we can help and what we can give continued to pour in. So many selfless acts of kindness have genuinely moved us and affirm that our community continuously cares for individuals and families in times of need. The pandemic has brought out the best of caring and compassion to help, and we are grateful on behalf of our board, staff, individuals, and families we serve.

Your financial donation to Odyssey House provides hope and the possibility of a future free of violence to thousands of individuals each year. Your donations are put to work immediately and support our programs year-round.

## 2021/2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW\*

\*Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association Financial Statement is audited by Fulcrum Group. To view complete Financial Statements please go to [www.odysseyhouse.ca](http://www.odysseyhouse.ca)



# OUR TEAM, OUR HEALING HEROS

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Odyssey House supports the employment of 42 brilliant, caring staff. Our programs would not be available without the dedicated work of our Emergency Shelter, Community Support, Outreach, Second Stage, Public Education, Childcare, Facilities, Management, Trauma Counselors, and Leadership staff.

This year they have utilized self-led training opportunities, spearheaded new and improved programming, navigated through outbreak statuses and health and safety measures, bravely led with a trauma-informed lens, and had a little fun too!

On behalf of our Board of Directors, Odyssey House Executive Director, and our community, thank you for standing with those who feel like they stand alone and empowering those that need it the most!



**OdysseyHouse**  
Equality and Empowerment

For more detailed information on our programs and services  
please visit [www.odysseyhouse.ca](http://www.odysseyhouse.ca)

**24-Hour Crisis Line: 780-532-2672**

**Office: 780-538-1332**

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or visit us on

 @OdysseyHousegp

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