

Annual Report



2025/2026

April 1st, 2025 -
March 31st, 2026

*Helping families
break free from the
cycle of abuse*



Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association



www.odysseyhouse.ca



780-538-1332



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Treaty 8 Land Acknowledgment



We acknowledge Treaty 8 territory—the traditional and ancestral territory of the Cree and Dene. We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Métis Settlements and the Métis Nation of Alberta, Regions 1, 4, 5 and 6 within the historical Northwest Métis Homeland. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.

Director's & Board President Statement

Each year, Odyssey House compiles our Annual Report to reflect on and share the many accomplishments made possible through the dedication of our staff, Board of Directors, partners, donors, and community. In the 2025/2026 fiscal year, our impact was shaped by a continued focus on connection, collaboration, and insight.

In the previous fiscal year, we completed renovations to our emergency shelter and childcare program to better respond to capacity needs. While this additional space has been beneficial, the ongoing and increasing demand for services for those fleeing domestic abuse and family violence reminds us that our work is far from complete.

Supporting healing and reducing the occurrence and impact of domestic abuse requires strong community collaboration. Survivors and families often need ongoing support to navigate the vast network of referrals, resources, and services available in Grande Prairie and surrounding areas. This is why we continued investing in Hope Grande Prairie, powered by Restore Hope, and the development of a collective database to strengthen our community's response to crisis. Our Board of Directors, leadership team, and staff remain committed to this initiative as a way to empower individuals moving from crisis toward thriving lives.

In the 2026/2027 fiscal year, Odyssey House will focus on shining a light on the complexity of family violence in Grande Prairie and surrounding areas, while continuing to provide our well-established intervention-based services. We are committed to strengthening trauma-informed supports that respond holistically to family violence and recognize the individualized needs of survivors, children, and families as they survive, heal, and rebuild.

Our team believes deeply in our purpose and remains committed to exploring new ways to lead Grande Prairie away from increasing rates of abuse and toward safety, acceptance, and hope for all people. On behalf of our Board of Directors, Executive Director, and staff, thank you for standing with those in need and helping remind every survivor that they deserve a life free from abuse.

Jenna Canavan
Board President

Mikaela Benson
Executive Director

Board of Directors



Jenna Canavan
President



Amy Diaz
Vice President



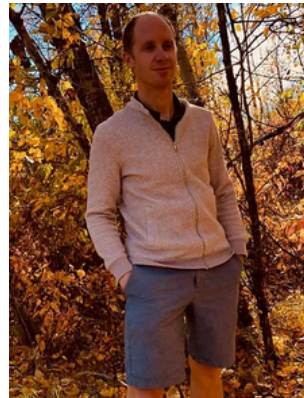
Shawn Penney
Treasurer



Shanda Berns
Secretary



Jenny Weaver
Director



Jason Smith
Director



Raylene Browe
Director



**Alicia Lacroix
Richard**
Director



Jessica Schoepp
Director

Values & Purpose Statement



Values

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

Committed to trauma-informed practices

Purpose Statement:

We support individuals impacted by family violence

Through:

1. Safe secure living options and services
2. Education and resources to end the cycle of abuse
3. Targeted advocacy, collaboration, and guidance

What is Family Violence?

Family violence is an abuse of power in a family or other trusting relationship where people rely on each other. When someone experiences family violence, their well-being, security and survival are threatened.

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.

Emergency Shelter

Odyssey House supports a 51-bed private, secure, welcoming facility for women and children needing short-term emergency accommodation.



188

Women Supported

by the emergency shelter program



156

Children Supported

by the emergency shelter program



2397

Crisis Calls

received for support & services

The Emergency Shelter Offers:

- 16 bedrooms (51 beds)
- Staff specialized in crisis intervention and safety planning
- Free on-site laundry
- Hot meals and snacks tailored to cultural and dietary needs
- Clothing
- Recreational and private spaces
- Support groups
- Respite Childcare and After School programs
- Accessible facility
- Pets welcome
- & all other basic needs

Emergency Shelter Highlights

Positive Outcomes & Personal Goals Met

Over the past year, 17 Danger Assessments were completed, and 164 women were discharged from the emergency shelter with safety plans in place, ensuring that they were better prepared for their next steps toward safety and stability.

Breaking Barriers Between Newcomers

Due to an increased number of women staying in shelter who are newcomers, our partnership with the Centre for Newcomers has increased. They have worked in collaboration with shelter Client Support Workers to assist women with achievement of goals, ESL classes, community connection and navigating form filling and processes related to immigration.

Forming Community-Based Partnerships

The shelter actively maintains strong, community-based partnerships with organizations such as The Friendship Centre, Native Counselling Services, Metis Housing, GPACOS, and Northwest Aboriginal Services. These collaborations are vital in supporting Indigenous women and their families by offering services grounded in Indigenous worldviews and helping to reduce systemic barriers to safety, healing, and stability.

A new partnership has been established with Mango Cabs and Women's First to provide more reliable and accessible transportation for clients.



Emergency Shelter Success Story

Strength, a mother of three, connected with shelter services while navigating the immediate and complex impacts of fleeing family violence. At the time of intake, Strength was managing multiple intersecting stressors, including legal involvement affecting both herself and her eldest child, limited financial resources, and significant barriers to securing safe housing.

Upon arrival, Strength presented with heightened anxiety and considerable parenting stress, both of which were understandable given the circumstances she and her children had experienced. Despite these challenges, she demonstrated a strong commitment to creating a safer and more stable environment for her family.

Throughout her stay, Strength engaged consistently with available supports; she participated in case planning, accessed community resources, and remained open to collaborative problem-solving with staff. Her situation was further complicated by barriers to housing access, including a poor credit history and a lack of current income. These systemic challenges made securing housing particularly difficult and required ongoing advocacy, persistence, and creative exploration of options.

Strength worked closely with staff to address these barriers, including exploring financial assistance programs, building connections with community partners, and identifying housing opportunities that aligned with her current circumstances. She also demonstrated resilience in navigating her legal situation, attending required appointments, and taking steps toward resolution.

Emergency Shelter Success Story

In addition to these external challenges, Strength continued to work through internal stressors, including anxiety and the demands of parenting while in crisis. Staff provided ongoing emotional support and encouragement, while also reinforcing her strengths and capacity as a parent. Over time, Strength showed increased confidence in her decision-making and ability to advocate for herself and her children.

Despite the many obstacles encountered during her stay, Strength remained focused on securing stable housing. Through her persistence and engagement, she ultimately transitioned into her own home.

Strength's journey reflects the realities many individuals face when leaving abusive environments—where safety is only the first step, and systemic barriers can significantly impact the path forward. Her story is one of resilience, determination, and growth. With continued support and stability, Strength and her children are now in a safer environment where they can begin rebuilding and moving forward.

Client Exit Surveys

Such amazing staff, they were very supportive and kind to both me and my son throughout the process, and made our stay that much more comforting in this difficult time.

The staff and other clients were accepting and kind. I am very grateful for the support and for reaching out to this woman's shelter. I will be forever thankful for the support and understanding I received.

Very nice and clean shelter

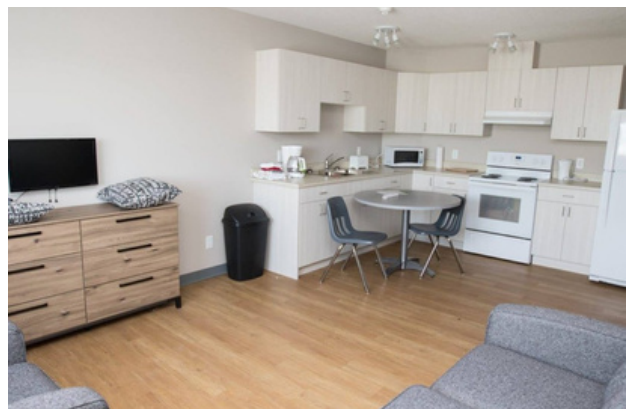
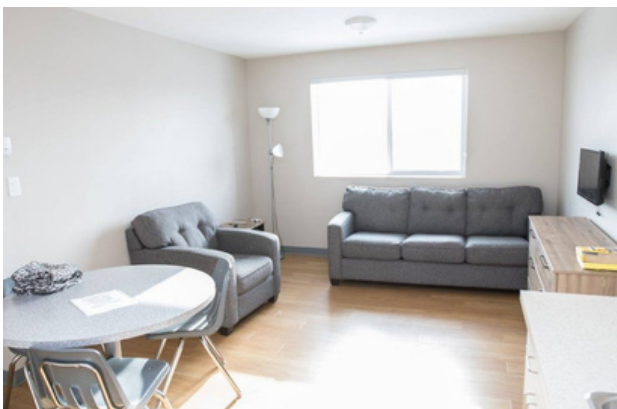
Serenity Place, Second Stage Shelter

24 Women

38 Children

Supported by the second-stage shelter program

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 five highly trained, caring community support workers to assist with attaining personal goals and client support.



Second Stage Shelter Highlights



Partnerships

Our partnerships with community agencies and Indigenous organizations continue to strengthen coordinated care and improve client outcomes. Through these collaborations, clients are connected to housing, food security, childcare, parenting supports, employment services, cultural resources, and specialized supports. Partnerships with the Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention and the Family Education Society have expanded access to women's support groups and parenting supports, while strong relationships with legal professionals enhance client advocacy, court support, and system navigation.

Fostering Growth and Independence

Participants are actively engaged in workforce readiness programs, post-secondary education, or employment.

Regular programming, including weekly support groups and quarterly community events, has strengthened connection among residents and fostered a supportive environment.

Pride in their homes is evident, with residents taking initiative in maintaining both their apartments and shared spaces.

Despite the ongoing housing crisis, Community Support Workers have remained focused on equipping participants with essential life skills, including financial literacy, credit building, and self-advocacy.

These efforts have supported smoother transitions into independent living, even as housing barriers persist.

Second Stage Shelter Success Story

After two separate stays in the emergency shelter, Strength, a young and determined mother, came to Serenity Place/Second Stage in search of long-term safety and support. While her time in the emergency shelter had been meaningful and necessary, each attempt to rebuild her life was disrupted by ongoing post-separation abuse. Her ex-partner continued to locate, harass, and stalk her, leaving her in a constant state of fear and uncertainty.

Knowing about Serenity Place, Strength completed an assessment and was approved for residency. In the safety and stability of Serenity Place, she was able to focus on healing, rebuild her life, and explore creative safety planning strategies. The program provided her with the security she needed to navigate court proceedings and plan her next steps with confidence.

Though her stay at Serenity Place was brief, it offered exactly what she needed: a safe space to recover, a supportive environment to grow, and the tools to move forward. Strength has successfully relocated to a new city, where she now lives with her family and continues her journey free from violence.



Second Stage Shelter Success Story

Client Letter

“To everyone at Odyssey House and Serenity Place,

Thank you for the past two years – for standing by me and my children, for helping us get through each and every day, and for being part of the reason I am where I am today.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to this place, and to every person here, who has helped me grow and become stronger. I was born again at Odyssey House, and I grew stronger at Serenity Place – surrounded by so many kind, compassionate, and supportive people. Because of the safety, love, and support you have given me and my children, I’ve become the person I am today.

I will never forget this place and the people in it. You have touched our lives in ways I can never fully express. And now, as time comes for me to leave, my heart feels heavy. I’m scared – just a little – about what lies ahead, about stepping into the world and facing the future. But I will try. I will keep moving forward.

If I had to describe all the good things about the people here, all the kindness, love, and support we received – I could write all day and still not finish.

So, from the bottom of my heart: thank you. Thank you for being part of our journey, for lifting us up, for believing in us. I will carry this place, and all of you, in my heart – always.”

Community Support & Outreach

445

People Supported

290 women, **152** children, **3** men

9

Rural Participants

2 Beaverlodge, **7** Valleyview)

44

Support Groups

66 unique attendees

312.5

Counselling Hours

193 sessions

Odyssey House is more than just an emergency shelter. Individuals do not need to stay at the shelter to access support services. Our Community Support Team provides one-to-one support to individuals of all genders, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses who may have already left an abusive relationship, are navigating unhealthy relationships, or need assistance accessing community resources.

Community Support & Outreach Offers:

- Danger assessments
- Safety planning
- Housing navigation
- Court support
- Income support
- Goal planning
- Community resource navigation
- Weekly support groups



Community Support & Outreach Highlights

Partnerships

Partnerships with Safe Psychology and Bear Creek Counseling continue to provide trauma counseling for clients healing from complex trauma. Community Support also strengthened collaboration with the Family Education Society to increase access to parenting supports, literacy programming, and community resources.

Ongoing collaboration with Victim Services, Grande Prairie Police Services, Child and Family Services, and Indigenous organizations supports safety planning, advocacy, and client navigation through complex systems.

Legal Aid

Community Support Workers assist clients in navigating complex legal systems by providing advocacy, safety planning, and coordination with partners such as Victim Services, police services, and Child and Family Services. Staff support clients in understanding court processes, attending appointments, and ensuring safety risks are clearly communicated to relevant professionals, helping clients feel more prepared and supported throughout legal proceedings.

Programming

Community Support restructured its group offerings into weekly psychoeducational workshops. These workshops build self-esteem, encourage self-awareness, and provide practical tools to support healing and long-term stability.



Community Support Success Story

During this reporting period, Outreach staff supported an Indigenous woman who was navigating the impacts of family violence, housing instability, and disconnection from her home community. She had experienced multiple barriers to accessing services in the past, including systemic mistrust, previous negative experiences with community agencies, and a lack of culturally safe support.

Connecting with staff was initially slow; however, staff focused on building trust and creating a sense of safety. The client expressed hesitation in accessing formal systems, particularly those connected to child welfare and legal processes. Outreach workers approached this with cultural humility, recognizing the broader historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, and prioritized relationship-building over immediate service navigation.

Support was tailored to the client's identified needs and cultural preferences. Outreach staff collaborated with local Indigenous service providers, with the client's consent, to ensure she had access to culturally meaningful supports. This included connecting her to community-based programming, traditional teachings, and spaces where she felt a sense of belonging and identity.

In addition to emotional support and safety planning, staff assisted the client in accessing housing resources and income support. It advocated for reducing barriers within systems she found difficult to navigate. Over time, the client reported feeling more supported and empowered and began taking steps toward securing stable housing and strengthening her connection to her community.

Childcare Support

63 Children	16,188 Hours
supported by the childcare programs	of trauma-informed programming to children accessing our programs

Childcare services are available to individuals staying in the Emergency Shelter or Second-Stage Shelter, as well as those accessing support groups, other programming, or Community Support services. We are committed to supporting parents by providing a safe, supportive environment where families can strengthen bonds, build structure and routines, and discuss any parenting concerns or questions. Respite childcare is also available to support parents attending appointments, meetings, or those in need of a break.

Out-of-School Care Program was developed for school-aged children and youth ages 5–18. The program is available to children staying in shelter, those who have previously accessed shelter services, or families connected to the Community Support team.



Childcare Program Highlights

Delivering for Unique Needs

Childcare and parenting support are delivered professionally, nonjudgmentally, and sensitively while considering diverse cultures. Every child has the right to live and play in a safe, protected environment that fosters optimum physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and social growth. We endeavor to provide the best possible information and support for all families in our program. This may include, but is not limited to, advocacy, referrals, resources, and case conferences.

We recognize the unique and individual needs of each child and their family. Therefore, the services are delivered case-by-case, allowing for unique and specific family needs.

Development of Strategies

In April 2023, the Childcare Program partnered with ASAP (Access, Supports, Participation), now Kids Included, to implement the Pyramid Model and related strategies. Through this partnership, childcare support workers received ongoing coaching, observation, and feedback to strengthen trauma-informed and inclusive practices within the program.

Childcare has now reached Alumni Status through the two-year partnership with Kids Included, allowing continued access to resources and supports. This work has significantly strengthened daily childcare practices and continues to support a high-quality, trauma-informed, and inclusive environment.



Childcare Program Success Story

A young mother and her three children (ages 4, 3, and 1.5) were referred to our Innovative Childcare Program through Serenity Place Second Stage Shelter after fleeing a situation of family violence. Due to significant safety concerns, the family had entered the shelter with very limited support networks. The mother had always been the sole caregiver for her children, who had never been separated from her or cared for by anyone else.

When she first connected with our program, the idea of leaving her children in someone else's care was extremely difficult—years of navigating an unsafe environment had understandably made it hard to build trust. Rather than pushing for immediate participation, our team focused on developing a relationship with the family and creating a supportive, gradual plan that respected the mother's comfort level.

Together, we created a gentle transition schedule. The children first attended very short visits, giving both the mother and the children time to become familiar with the space and the staff. Over the course of a month, these visits slowly increased. The transitions were not always easy, particularly for the youngest child, who would often cry and cling to the childcare worker for much of the visit. However, with patience, consistency, and nurturing support, trust began to grow.



Childcare Program Success Story

Success Story Continued

Each visit brought small but meaningful changes. The children began to feel more comfortable in the environment, and strong relationships formed with the childcare staff. As the children's confidence increased, the mother's confidence grew as well. What once felt overwhelming gradually became a safe and reliable support.

Today, the mother regularly utilizes the program, sometimes up to three times per week. This simple but critical support allows her to attend important health appointments, meet with community supports, and work toward her personal goals. Having trusted childcare gives her the space she needs to focus on healing and building a stable future for her family.

This story highlights how relationships, patience, and small, thoughtful support can make a profound difference. By creating a safe, trusting environment for both parents and children, our program helps families impacted by family violence take important steps toward stability, independence, and hope.



Public Education

Our Public Education Program is rooted in community connection and collaboration. We aim to raise awareness about the impacts of family and gender-based violence through education, support, referrals, and advocacy.

We offer tailored presentations for schools, colleges, community groups, summer camps, businesses, and non-profit organizations to ensure programming meets the unique needs of each audience.

Odyssey House maintains a strong presence throughout Grande Prairie and surrounding rural communities, working with students from elementary through high school to foster conversations around respect, safety, and healthy relationships.

A few examples of our presentations are:



School

- Being Kind & Calm
- Emotions and Self Esteem
- Bullying and Healthy Friendships
- Healthy Relationships
- Safe Relationships

Community

- Safe Relationships
- Odyssey House Services
- Understanding Family Violence
- How To Help

*This year we provided **91** presentations and public engagement sessions to over **6,609** individuals.*

Public Education Highlights

61

School Presentations

with a total of 915 participants

30

Community Presentations

with a total of 430 participants

Throughout the year, we team up with incredible community partners to host and support fundraising events that make a real difference. From the heartfelt Royal LePage Night Light Walk and high-energy Purse Bingo, to the collaborative Sunrise House/Odyssey House Annual Golf Tournament, these events do more than raise funds, they build solidarity. We also host GrandeCon, our own celebration of creativity and community that brings thousands together for a great cause.

Odyssey House understands that true healing from domestic abuse and family violence begins with strong, connected communities. Hope Grande Prairie was born from the Re-imagining the Family Justice System pilot project, bringing together local organizations to tackle systemic service gaps through collaboration.

The HopeHub platform supports this work by enabling informed consent and secure data sharing between service providers. It streamlines care coordination, enhances trauma-informed wraparound services, and uses real-time dashboards to give a clear view of Grande Prairie's evolving social landscape. This helps agencies align efforts, track outcomes, and respond more effectively to complex community needs.

20

New partnerships formed

39

Existing partnerships engaged with

38

Public engagement events attended

Public Education Success Story

In the student feedback surveys from the grade 7–9 healthy relationship presentations, several common comments reflected the main messages students took away from the discussions. Students wrote “I learned how to tell if there are green flags or red flags in dating,” “healthy relationships are sometimes complex and what to look for / watch out for in a partner,” and “that if someone is hurting me, it isn’t my fault.” Other common themes in the surveys included “don’t share your passwords” and “consent is key,” showing that students understood the importance of personal boundaries, respect, and safety in relationships, both in person and online.

During the presentations, students also made comments and responded to each other while discussing different scenarios related to healthy relationships. Students said things like “you shouldn’t feel pressured to do something you don’t want to do,” “jealousy isn’t the same as caring,” “if you have to check someone’s phone all the time, that’s not really trust,” and “you can break up with someone if they don’t treat you right.” Other students added “a healthy relationship means both people feel safe,” “it’s different if someone says sorry but keeps doing the same thing,” and “social media makes drama worse.” These types of responses showed that students were able to apply the concepts being discussed to real situations and were thinking about how respect, consent, trust, and communication affect both dating relationships and friendships.



Empowerment Through Community

We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of **ALL** of our contributors this year. Every dollar, whether from businesses or individuals, makes a significant impact and provides the crucial funding needed to keep our operations running. Your support directly helps us continue offering essential services to those who need them most.



165

Total Donors



301

Donations Received

70 businesses/organizations

95 Individuals



7%

of Annual Budget

Top Community Contributors

- Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
- Shoppers Foundation Women's Health
- Christmas Convoy For Kids
- NuVista Energy Ltd
- Jim Hansen's Gateway Ford Lincoln
- ARC Resources Ltd.
- Apical Forestry Consulting
- Canadian Natural Resources
- Peace Diagnostic Imaging
- GP Firefighters Charitable Foundation
- The Rotary Club
- KMSC Law LLP

At Odyssey House, we are deeply grateful for the physical donations we receive. These contributions help us replenish essential supplies and lower costs, allowing us to dedicate more resources to supporting those we serve. Some of the most impactful items include toiletries, clothing, non-perishable food, baby supplies, and household essentials. Each thoughtful donation directly enhances the care and support we can offer to individuals and families as they rebuild their lives. This year, our top non-monetary organizational contributors are:

- Costco
- Cobbs
- Giant Tiger
- Winners
- Marshalls
- Home Sense
- Bootlegger
- Warehouse One
- Pennington's

Gift-in-kind contributions from individuals are incredibly valuable. We are constantly inspired by the generosity of our community and remain committed to showing our gratitude for your support all year long.

Fundraisers

During the 2024/2025 period, we hosted 2 impactful fundraising events to support our programs and raise awareness for domestic violence prevention. :



Odyssey Sunrise Golf Tournament 2025

Huge thank you to our title sponsor **Hansen Ford**.



Grande Con 2025

Top Third-Party Fundraisers

We were fortunate to have local companies host third-party fundraisers on our behalf. Below are some of the major fundraising initiatives that were held during the 2024/2025 period:

Nuvista Energy

NuVista Energy organized a Golf Tournament where all proceeds went to Odyssey House.

Shoppers Foundation Women's wealth

Shoppers Foundation Women's Health supported Odyssey House through their Giving Shelter and Spring Beauty Mingle campaigns

Centurion Canada Rentals & Services

Centurion Canada Rentals & Services hosted an internal silent auction, with the company matching funds raised, and all proceeds were donated to Odyssey House.

Grande Prairie Truckin' Christmas Convoy

Grande Prairie Truckin' Christmas Convoy hosted a convoy fundraiser in support of Odyssey House.

Royal LePage Auction For Shelter

Royal LePage Realty Group hosted an online auction, Purse Bingo and the Night Light Walk in support of Odyssey House.

Thank You



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Charitable Registration
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