



Jessica Martel
Memorial Foundation

2022 COMMUNITY REPORT

Land Acknowledgement

The Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation acknowledges the traditional lands upon which we live, work, and play. We recognize that all Albertans are Treaty people and have a responsibility to understand our history so that we can honor the past, be aware of the present, and create a just and caring future.

We celebrate and value the resiliency, successes, and teachings that Alberta's Indigenous people have shown us, as well as the unique contributions of every culture. The Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation is located on Treaty 6 land, which is the traditional territory of the Plains Cree and an ancient gathering place of many Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. These lands have also been home to and a central trading place of the Blackfoot, Nakoda, Assiniboine, Dene, and the Métis people of western Canada.

We honour the courage and strength of Indigenous women, men and two spirited. We honor them as life givers and care givers as we honor and learn from their continuing achievements, their consistent strength, and their remarkable endurance. The Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation serves all nations and all people.

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Messages from The Executive Team and the Board of the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation

Domestic Violence is an epidemic problem that impacts all of us. It has serious implications for the individuals involved and on the health of our communities. For the seventh consecutive year, Stats Canada reported an increase in police reported intimate partner violence, this results to **114,132 victims** in 2021. Eight in ten of these victims (79%) were women and girls. For the fifth consecutive year, Stats Canada reported a 3% increase in police reported family violence from 2020 to 2021. Since 2009, police reported family violence against children and youth has increased by 25%, and violence against seniors has increased by 37%. These are just police reported incidents of violence – can you imagine what the number is when you consider incidents that go unreported?

Did you know that Alberta has the third highest rate of self-reported spousal abuse in the Canadian Provinces? In 2021/2022 Alberta shelters received **65,390 calls** from people seeking support. Of those calls **25,530** were for admission. Of those requests **7,620** were sheltered – including **3,373 children**. **11,546 adults** and **6,241 children** were turned away due to capacity.

We can no longer stand by and do nothing. Domestic violence is causing great harm to all of us, to our health care system, judicial system, schools, economy, workforce, human rights, and equality, and to healing, truth and reconciliation for all people of Turtle Island; past and present, indigenous and non-indigenous. According to a study conducted by the University of Saskatchewan, one serious incident of domestic violence costs **\$85,573**. Alberta had **13,291** police reported incidents of domestic violence, resulting in an estimated cost of **\$1.14 billion dollars**.

It is important for all of us to stand up and say no more to violence in our homes. As a society, we need to be the voice to help free families from a life of fear. As a community, we can make a difference and change lives. We have seen it at Jessie's House from the time our clients arrive to the time they leave, in the community, at events, in schools, in emergency rooms and working along side our partners. We are giving people hope of a better future. We are breaking the cycle of domestic violence. We would like to share with you a message from a transgender Woman after her stay at Jessies House:

"I came from an abusive family, and I needed help. I was constantly overwhelmed and confused by what my family was doing to me. Every day, a different memory of life at home floods back to me, that seemed normal at the time, of the abuse they put me through. I thought I was a criminal for being transgender. I thought I was hurting my family by being alive. It felt like there was no way out until I found Jessie's House, and I cry thinking about where I'd be if it were not for the caring people at Jessie's House.

Jessie's House gave me a clean room and good, healthy food. They gave me space and time to realize I could trust people. Now I have an income and a place of my own because of them. I have fond memories of a family from Jessie's House that I think about often to relax. I've gained my confidence back, and I am looking into nursing programs. I have a loving partner who I cherish and who cherishes me back. It all seemed impossible, way too overwhelming, that I would never be valued in society. Men can be abused. I sure was, and Jessie's House saved my life."

Healing starts at the top with inspiration from the strong, committed board members, and spreads to all our staff and community partners. This is you! This is all of you! From our Fusion partners offering our ladies clothing, to the commitment from our delegates in supporting our work, to our volunteers and our dedicated team. It takes all of us helping each other. This report celebrates all our contributions to healing, truth and reconciliation for all who come to Jessie's House.

Marla Poelzer, Executive Director and **Sylvia Ladouceur**, Deputy Director

As the Board Chair of the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation, I am pleased to report on the growth and progress we have made in our efforts to prevent and advocate against all forms of domestic violence.

Since our establishment, the Foundation has worked tirelessly to raise awareness about domestic violence and its devastating impacts on individuals, families, and communities. Through our various programs, initiatives, and partnerships, we have been able to provide critical support and resources to survivors of domestic violence and their families.

One of our most significant achievements is the establishment of the Jessie's House, a safe haven for individuals and their children fleeing domestic violence. This 35-bed facility offers a wide range of services, including emergency shelter, counseling, and transitional support. Over the years, we have helped hundreds of families escape dangerous situations and rebuild their lives.

In addition to our shelter services, we have also developed a robust public education campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence and promote healthy relationships. Our workshops, training sessions, and community events have reached thousands of individuals across the region, empowering them with the knowledge and tools needed to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

Despite our many accomplishments, there is still much work to be done to prevent and advocate against domestic violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the issue, with many survivors facing increased risk due to social isolation, economic insecurity, and limited access to support services.

To address these challenges, we will continue to build on our existing programs and partnerships while exploring new opportunities to reach more survivors and raise awareness about domestic violence. We will also prioritize the expansion of our services to meet the growing demand for support and resources, including the development of new programs and initiatives tailored to the needs of diverse communities.

Overall, the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation remains committed to its mission of ending domestic violence and supporting survivors on their journey to healing and empowerment. We are grateful for the support of our partners, donors, and volunteers, and look forward to continuing our important work together.

Christine Moore, Board Chair

Message from Honourable Jeremy Nixon Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services



As Alberta's Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services, it is my honour to work with incredible organizations such as the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation, as they work to ensure those fleeing violence are supported.

Family violence impacts many Albertans, and there are lasting effects for every victim. My own family was hurt by domestic violence as my grandmother was

forced to flee from my grandfather to keep herself and her children safe. At the time, there were not the same resources and supports that we have today, but she endured and did her best to keep life normal for her children as they lived in hotels and sought support. I can only imagine what life would have been like if she could have had access to the same supports that come from somewhere like Jessie's House.

Since opening just a few years ago, Jessie's House has served and supported hundreds of individuals fleeing family violence. In addition to supporting those in need of support, the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation is helping to educate and bring awareness to the community. We cannot stop family violence if we do not know it is happening.

I am honoured to work in partnership with the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation. I would like to thank all staff, volunteers, donors and other supporters who have helped make a difference for those experiencing family violence. I look forward to seeing what lies ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Nixon', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Nixon

Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services

Message from ACWS

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters works with our members in pursuit of our shared vision of a world free from violence and abuse. As one of the 39 members in the provincial network organization of domestic violence shelters in Alberta, the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation is providing much-needed frontline care for people facing domestic abuse, through Jessie's House, as well as engaging in important violence prevention work in their community.

Members of the ACWS support our ethical moral framework and agree to share information to further our shared mission. We advocate for ACWS members and work with them to end domestic violence through culture-shifting violence prevention programs, collective data and research, and front-line training. With support from ACWS, the JMMF is helping to provide safety, support families, and improve communities. By bringing Leading Change™ programs to Morinville and its surrounding areas, and by working with children and youth, the JMMF is making a difference in interrupting the cycle of violence from continuing into future generations.



Jessica's Story



Jessica Martel was a mother to three beautiful children. She was a singer who loved writing. She was loved by her mother, Lynne, and the rest of her family and friends. On April 29, 2009, she was murdered as she tried to leave her abusive relationship.

Her murder rocked the town of Morinville and Sturgeon County. Jessica's family and friends were devastated after losing her. Many community members faced vicarious trauma after seeing their loved ones experience abuse. Children can experience immediate

and permanent harm from the trauma, and witnessing abuse is as harmful as experiencing it directly.

Jessica wanted to leave her abusive relationship. Her mother Lynne tried to help her leave, but it was hard to find supports in their community. They tried the city but met long wait times. This harsh reality remains true today – many rural communities lack resources for individuals who are experiencing domestic violence. For communities that have shelters, there simply is not enough capacity in shelters to provide safe space to match the need in our community.

Statistics show that the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship is when you leave. Eventually, Jessica's situation got worse. Lynne and Jessica made a plan after doing their own research. However, things took a turn and Jessica lost her life. Her children lost their mother, Lynne lost a daughter, and her family and friends lost a shining light. Jessica's story is why we are here – to prevent this from happening again.

"I did not want Jessica's story to end like this. She had the right to live a happy life, free of fear. We shared a dream of one day opening a safe haven for families fleeing family violence and that dream kept coming to me. I shared that vision with others, and they encouraged me to do something about it.

One day, my cousin showed up at my door with a group of women. They wanted to make a difference and wanted to help me realize the dream Jessica and I shared. We established the JMMF in January of 2012 around my kitchen table."

LYNNE ROSYCHUK, Jessica's Mother and Founder of the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation

HISTORY OF THE JESSICA MARTEL MEMORIAL FOUNDATION (JMMF)

From its inception, JMMF has been a grassroots movement driven by a group of passionate community members. The organization was run by an operational board, including the members who founded the organization. The board was very involved in the day-to-day operations, providing education and outreach support and driving fundraising activities to build Jessie's House.

This grassroots momentum was not limited to the board and volunteers. Morinville, Sturgeon County, and the surrounding area have provided overwhelming support to this cause. In 2018, JMMF broke ground for a 35-bed all-gender shelter. Jessie's House opened its doors in May 2020.

The founders had achieved their goal of providing a safe place to stay, but there were no signs of slowing down.

After opening the doors to Jessie's House, JMMF experienced some growing pains. The ongoing pandemic, along with internal challenges such as staff turn over, and long-term funding uncertainty, created many challenges in our first year of operations. At one point we were unsure if Jessie's doors would remain open. In May 2021 the Foundation hired a new Executive Director and Operations Manager, now Deputy Director.

They immediately aligned a new mission, vision, and values for the Foundation, established processes and procedures, secured ongoing government funding, and fostered a culture of respect and transparency.

In 2022, we were awarded the Purple Ribbon Award for Shelter Turnaround of the Year!





THANK YOU to our 2022 Board Members!

Christine Moore, Chair

Wendy Dugas, Vice Chair

Mike Pascuzzo, Secretary

Bobi-Rae Miller, Treasurer

Crystal Gossman, Director at Large

Tansie Horncastle, Director at Large

Edward Langer, Director at Large

Lynda Moffat, Director at Large

Teodora O'Donnell, Director at Large

Cindy Turner, Director at Large

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Marla Poelzer, Executive Director

Sylvia Ladouceur, Deputy Director

FOUNDER

Lynne Rosychuk, Founder
and Jessica's Mother

Board Development and Strategic Planning

With new leadership at the helm, the JMMF Board was able to move from an operational board to a governance board. In 2022, we recruited 3 new board members, adding to the diversity of the board. The board completed Governance 101 training in December 2022. The board struck an AGM Committee to plan the first Annual General Meeting and redevelop and amend the original bylaws from 2012. The updated bylaws will be presented for approval at the first Annual General Meeting in April 2023.

In May 2022, the JMMF Board and Executive sat down to engage in strategic planning with the help of a consultant. Creating a robust and comprehensive plan for the next three years with three main areas of focus:



Breaking the Stigma of Domestic Violence



Financial Sustainability through a Diverse Funding Strategy



Create a Second Stage Housing Strategy

Mission: To break the cycle of domestic violence through the actions of advocacy, awareness, community engagement, education, and safe housing.

Vision: A future free of domestic violence for all individuals.

VALUES

- **Safety:** We value a safe environment that allows us to challenge each other and explore ideas
- **Partnership:** We value and seek partnership whose values align with those of the Foundation and together we can reach our vision
- **Empowerment:** We value innovative and creative thinking as a means of serving the best interests of the individuals and families we serve
- **Awareness:** We value positive, continual messaging that highlight healthy relationships.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

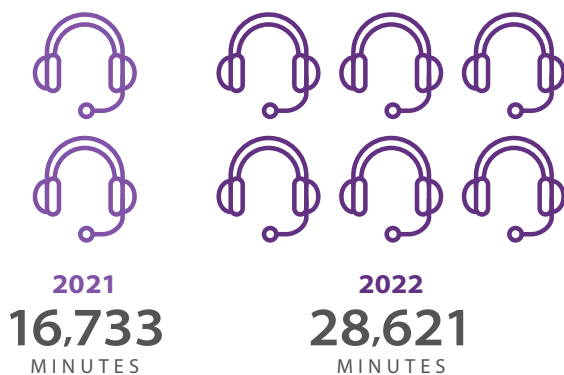
- We are committed to healing, truth and reconciliation for all people of Turtle Island; past and present, indigenous and non-indigenous.
- We promote safety, accessibility, and inclusion for individuals of all races, genders, sexual orientations, religions, nationalities, ages, and disabilities.
- We foster a culture of respect for all clients, staff, and visitors to Jessie’s House.
- We honour and respect the lived experiences of everyone.
- We celebrate and value the resiliency, successes, and teachings of indigenous people, as well as the unique contributions of every culture.

What We Do

24 HOUR CRISIS AND INTAKE LINE

The 24 Hour Crisis and Intake Line is often the first point of contact for individuals and families experiencing domestic violence. We are proud to offer around-the-clock support 365 days a year in over 200 languages.

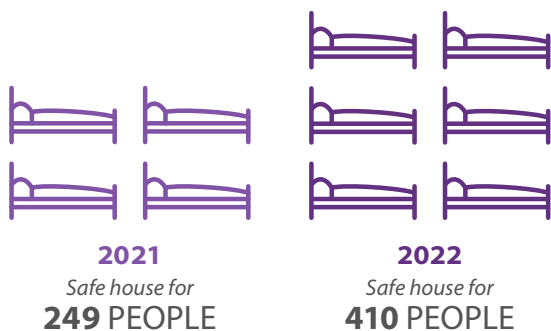
In 2022, we answered **2,094 calls** and provided crisis support for **28,621 minutes**. This is a **71% increase** from 2021 (16,733 minutes).



JESSIE'S HOUSE

Jessie's House is a 9,000 sq foot, 11 room, 35 bed all gender emergency safe house for individuals and families. Our Residential Program provides inclusive, client-led support applying trauma-informed practices. We meet our clients where they are to build safety plans, provide crisis support, and refer to community partners based on the client's needs.

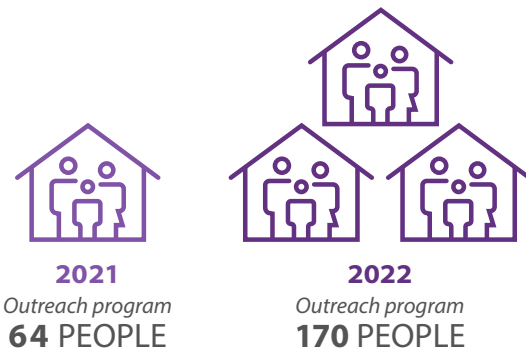
In 2022, we housed **212 adults** and **198 children**. This is a **64% increase** from 2021 when we served 130 adults and 119 children. On average, our clients stay in shelter for 30 days.



OUTREACH

The Outreach Program provides services to community members who are experiencing domestic violence and follow-up supports to clients after they leave Jessie's House. The Outreach Program also works with community partners to provide education, awareness, and community engagement.

In early 2022, JMMF expanded the Outreach Program, hiring 2 new staff members. This allowed us to expand our reach in the community. It also provided the opportunity to focus more attention on clients who were graduating from the Residential Program, welcoming them into the Outreach Program for continued support. In 2022 we supported **92 adults** and **78 children** through our Outreach Program. This is an **increase of 165%** from 2021, when we served 53 adults and 11 children.



INNOVATIVE CHILDCARE

The Innovative Childcare Program supports children who access our Residential and Outreach programs. This programming engages the whole family, encouraging healthy interactions with self and others, bonding time and healing. We provide childcare, which allows parents to attend appointments and programming that is essential to their journey of healing.

In 2022, we expanded the Innovative Childcare Program by creating the Childcare Support Worker role, providing the opportunity for the Child and Youth Coordinator to work on programming in the schools and launch the Inspire Program.



INSPIRE PROGRAM

The Inspire Program is a partnership with Four Winds Public School. This program is for grade 7-9 students who identify as female. Inspire explores leadership, healthy relationships, bullying, self-image, societal pressures, and wellness. The program empowers participants to make healthy choices, build self-worth, and nurture healthy relationships.

This program was launched in September 2022, with **10-12 students** taking part.

DOMESTIC ABUSE RESPONSE TEAM (DART)

JMMF launched the DART Program in December 2021. In partnership with Alberta Health Services, DART provides 24/7 crisis intervention and no-cost, specialized support to patients who are experiencing any form of domestic violence. After a healthcare provider makes a referral, we respond promptly in person or over the phone to provide crisis intervention through safety planning and a risk assessment. Collaboration is key, and our DART Responder works with community partners to provide appropriate referrals.

In its first year, our DART Team responded to **110 referrals** from community hospitals.

The Domestic Abuse Response Team won the 2022 Inspiration Award – Leadership in Family Violence Prevention.

Community Engagement

In its early days, JMMF offered many events in the community. This served as an opportunity to educate community members about domestic violence and the work we do, as well as advocate for opening a shelter in the community and fundraise for Jessie's House.

Jessie's House opened in May 2020, which was just as the world shut down as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the uncertainty surrounding public health measures and the risk associated with offering (and potentially cancelling) events, JMMF did not offer in-person events during this time.



BREAK FREE 5/10K RUN & WALK

In 2022, after a 2-year hiatus, JMMF relaunched the annual charity run with a new name and branding. The Break Free 5/10k Run & Walk took place on June 19, 2022. We welcomed **125 runners and walkers**, and **29 volunteers**.

This event provided the opportunity to share about the prevalence of domestic violence in the community as well as resources that are available. We partnered with Mike Cameron to share his story about losing his girlfriend to domestic violence and emcee the event. As the run took place on Father's Day, Mike's son DJed, providing upbeat music for the attendees.

The run raised **\$10,000** for the new playground Jessie's Adventure Park.



BREAK FREE
5/10k Run & Walk



GOLF TOURNAMENT

In 2021, JMMF hosted its first golf tournament fundraiser at Cardiff Golf and Country Club. We welcomed approximately **120 golfers**, including many important stakeholders and Hon. Dale Nally who was the event emcee and hole 12 BBQ sponsor. The 2021 Annual Golf Tournament raised **\$25,000** for Jessie's House

Due to the event's enormous success the Foundation was able to declare the golf tournament an annual fundraising event, hosting the second year on August 18, 2022. The 2022 Annual Golf Tournament raised **\$37,500** for the Inspire Program.

SHOOT PASS SUPPORT

In October 2022, JMMF partnered with WIN House to put on a charity hockey event in Edmonton. The event featured a wing night and two hockey games – the University of Alberta Pandas vs the MacEwan University Griffins faced off first, followed by the Edmonton Oilers Alumni vs Edmonton Police Association Blues. The proceeds of this event benefited WIN House and Jessie's House. We also used the event to raise awareness about the importance of the work we do to support families fleeing domestic violence in the Edmonton area.

Advocacy and Awareness



LIGHT IN THE WINDOW

November is Family Violence Prevention month in Alberta. JMMF commemorates it with the Light in the Window Campaign. The Light in the Window Campaign encourages healthy and respectful relationships and calls on the community to declare that family violence in our neighbourhoods, schools, and homes is unacceptable. We share information about the impacts of family violence, as well as available resources, on social media and in the community.

In 2022 we added a Share the Light component to this campaign to raise money for a new playground at Jessie's House. Share the Light brought in **\$6,951.58** in 2022. The online awareness campaign reached more than **17,000 impressions** on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Our Outreach Team set up at Parent Teacher Night and the Morinville Christmas market to engage with our community in person. We also participated in the Lite Up the Nite Parade, which was attended by approximately **3,000 people**.



Global News Give Me Shelter

GIVE ME SHELTER

Global Edmonton has offered The Give Me Shelter campaign for the past 19 years. Give Me Shelter benefits A Safe Place, Jessie's House, LaSalle Shelter, Lurana Shelter, WIN House, and WINGS of Providence. The purpose of this campaign is to raise funds to support our mission and vision and provides exposure to the issues of domestic violence and the resources and supports available to a very large audience.

In 2021, Give Me Shelter raised **\$237,751.92** with the help of a large donor. In 2022 the campaign raised **\$87,184.90**.

WE HEAR YOU TOO

Women's Shelters. That is the name often used for domestic violence shelters. While women are disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence, other groups experience abuse too. Jessie's House is an all-gender shelter. We accept anyone who needs our help, regardless of gender.

The We Hear You Too campaign shares information about how members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community experience gender-based violence uniquely and disproportionately. This campaign shares information about gender-based violence, barriers in place, and resources that are available (including Jessie's House!). The We Hear You Too campaign also shares information about how cis-het men are impacted by family violence.

While most of our clients are women and children, we welcomed **21 men and their children** in 2022 and **10 trans or nonbinary individuals** since opening Jessie's House.



Jessie's House is an all-gender shelter.

Family violence can happen to anyone from any background. We are here to help individuals of all genders, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and cis-men.

We Hear You Too



MOOSEHIDE WALK

The Moosehide Campaign is a grassroots movement for Indigenous men and boys to take a stand against violence. In May 2022, JMMF took part in the annual Moosehide Walk with the local school and other community members to stand up against violence.

Stakeholders



"Jessie's House is a much needed addition to our community, and I fully support their amazing work. They do so much more than provide shelter; they provide life skills and much needed counselling to community members in need. Join me in supporting this important cause during Family Violence Prevention Month."

RAY WHITE, Councillor Elect, Town of Morinville

VOLUNTEERS

JMMF engages volunteer assistance for the Break Free 5/10k Run & Walk, the Annual Golf Tournament, and other events as required. We also put out a call for volunteers to help cook in our kitchen in late 2022. We receive an overwhelming response, and we are grateful to everyone who volunteers their time.

PARTNERSHIPS

We are grateful to our community partners who are helping to create a future free of domestic violence for all individuals.

- Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
- The Father's House
- Fusion Thrift Shoppe
- Hello Fresh
- Midstream Support Society
- Morinville Chamber of Commerce
- Sobey's Morinville
- St. Albert Chamber of Commerce
- Staples St Albert
- Sturgeon County
- The Town of Morinville
- Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
- Alexander First Nation
- Children and Family Services
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Elder Rick Makokis
- Families First
- Money Mentors
- Morinville Community of Practice
- Morinville Marvelous Moms and Adopt a Family
- Morinville Public Library
- Morinville School Division
- Multicultural Health Brokers Alberta
- Optimal Yoga and Wellness
- Outloud St. Albert
- Pride Centre of Edmonton
- Rae-Ann Wood-Schatz – Integrity Seminars
- RCMP
- St. Albert Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Committee
- St. Albert Family Resource Centre
- St. Albert Housing Society
- St. Albert School Division
- Sturgeon Country School Division
- Victim Services Alberta

“The spirit of healing, reconciliation, and peacefulness is apparent as you enter this beautiful, inspirational home.”

VIC MITCHELL

“We continue to support Jessie’s House, built in honour of Lynne’s beloved daughter Jessica Martel. We pray there will always be a room available for those in need, as no one should ever be turned away from a safe place when in danger of domestic violence.”

CINDY & BRUCE MCPHERSON

“When I was eight years old, my mother, sisters and I sought the safety of our local Women’s Shelter after years of on-going family violence. As a young girl, I might have been afraid of the unknown (the new smells, rules, people); but the quiet and caring atmosphere of the Shelter introduced me to a new world – one free of imminent danger and constant fear. The Shelter, and guidance they provided, gave my young self hope. I am confident that Jessie’s House is helping to provide women and children with the power of hope, and that is why I have supported Jessie’s House in the past and will continue to support them in the future.”

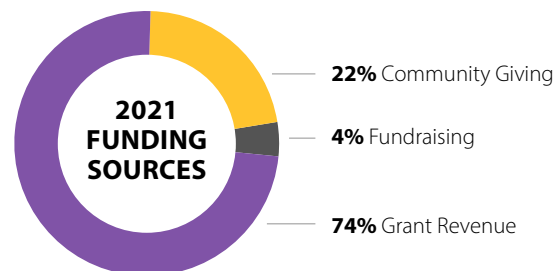
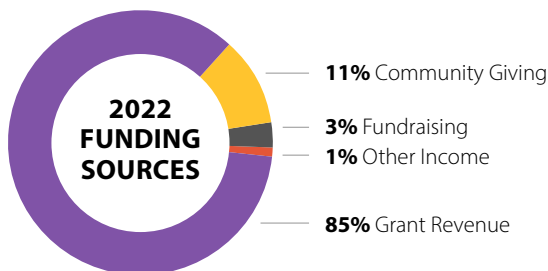
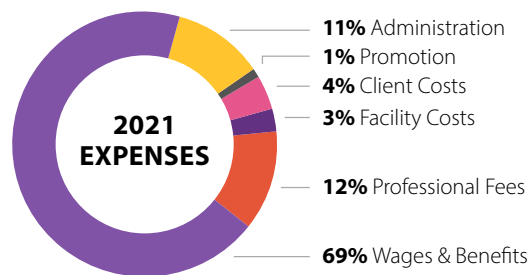
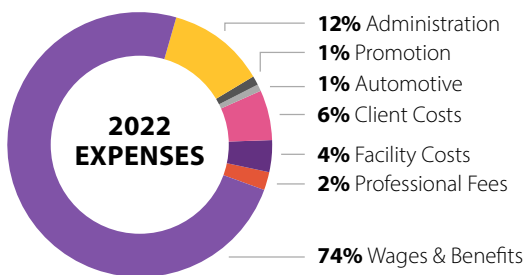
ANONYMOUS DONOR

DONORS

JMMF would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our donors for their generous contributions. We are very proud of the support of our community which allowed us to reach the goal of opening Jessie’s House. The continued support of our donors allows us to grow and make a positive impact for vulnerable community members. We are truly grateful for their support and commitment to creating a future free of domestic violence for all individuals.

FUNDERS

- Alberta Seniors, Community and Social Services (SCSS)
- Women’s Shelters Canada
- St Albert Community Foundation
- Alberta Healthy Services (AHS)
- Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Morinville
- Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Sturgeon County
- Alberta Jobs Now Program (AJNP)
- Alberta Children Services – Early Childhood Educator
- Eileen Labonte Foundation



Sponsors and Community Partners



Cindy & Bruce
McPherson



CAMERON
CORPORATION



Until all homes are safe, there's Jessie's House.



SHELTER INTAKE/CRISIS LINE

1-866-939-2850 (24/7)
587-598-7361 (text support)
support@jmmf.ca

ADMINISTRATION LINE

780-939-2870
info@jmmf.ca

OUTREACH PROGRAM

587-879-6125
outreach@jmmf.ca

