

# REPORT TO THE Community

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation acknowledges the lands upon which we live, work, and play. We are located on Treaty 6 land, and we wish to thank the Cree, Blackfoot, Assiniboine, Dene, Iroquois, Inuit, and many other nations who have gathered on these lands for thousands of years. We also thank the Métis people of the North Saskatchewan River Territory and Western Canada.

This land has been welcoming guests for tens of thousands of years. We wish to acknowledge the many migrants who have made Canada their home. Many of these migrants are also Indigenous to their home countries and have also been colonized for hundreds of years. This legacy of colonization has left Indigenous peoples impoverished as the colonizers took away land and extracted rich resources. These migrants had to leave their countries to seek a better life for their families.

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. We honour the legacy of colonization and its impacts on Indigenous Albertans and newcomers. Most of all, we are grateful to the Indigenous people of Alberta for sharing their land with us and blessing us with its abundance.



## Message from the Executive Team and Board Chair

As we reflect on another remarkable year at the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation, we are filled with gratitude and hope. With the steadfast support of our community, partners, and staff, we have continued to break the cycle of domestic violence—offering advocacy, education, safe housing, and healing for individuals and families across Sturgeon County and beyond.

Celebrating five years of Jessie's House and the grand opening of Eileen's Place has reminded us of both how far we've come and how much work remains. Each milestone is a testament to the courage of survivors and the collective power of community action. This year, we answered more crisis calls, reached more children and families, and launched new programs—including an expansion of Inspire.

Looking ahead, we are excited to release a new strategic plan in 2026, building on a strong foundation and charting a course toward an even brighter, more inclusive future. The challenges we face—chronic underfunding, increasing need, and evolving forms of violence—are real, but they are not insurmountable. With your continued partnership, we will keep opening doors and shaping services that empower survivors, nurture resilience, and foster hope.

Thank you for walking alongside us in this urgent and essential journey. Together, we are creating the future we want for our community: one that is safe, compassionate, and free from violence.

**Marla Poelzer**, Executive Director

&

**Christine Moore**, Chair

## Message from ACWS

On behalf of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, I want to extend heartfelt congratulations to the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation on a year of incredible achievements and leadership.

The milestone of five years of Jessie's House, the opening of Eileen's Place, and the launch of your Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention Project are not just organizational successes—they are essential contributions to Alberta's broader efforts to end gender-based violence.

The work at the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation aligns closely with the Government of Alberta's *10-Year Strategy to End Gender-Based Violence*, particularly in key focus areas such as *prevention and education, enhancing shelter and housing supports, and supporting survivors through trauma-informed and culturally relevant services*. Jessie's House and Eileen's Place provide critical safety and healing in rural Alberta—ensuring survivors in smaller communities aren't left behind. Meanwhile, your prevention efforts are creating upstream change by engaging communities before violence occurs.

At ACWS, we are proud to walk alongside the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation and other member organizations who are leading this work on the ground. You are not only responding to crisis—you are shaping systems, shifting attitudes, and building a safer, more equitable province for all.

Congratulations on another remarkable year. Your dedication continues to inspire and drive change across Alberta.

With gratitude and solidarity,

**Catherine (Cat) Champagne**, Executive Director  
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

# Breaking the Cycle of Domestic Violence

## MISSION:

The Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation is breaking 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*
- » *Empowerment*
- » *Partnership*
- » *Awareness*



## 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 abilities.
- 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.

## BOARD

Thank you to our 2024 Board of Directors!

- Christine Moore – Chair
- Wendy Dugas – Vice Chair
- Bobi Rae Miller – Treasurer
- Mike Pascuzzo – Secretary
- Tansie Horncastle
- Jacob Ohe
- Erick Ambtman
- Teodora O'Donnell

# Advocacy

We are serious about achieving our vision of a future free of domestic violence for all individuals. This means that a lot of work goes on behind the scenes to advocate for our clients and large-scale system change. We believe in collective action, and we work with partners across the sector to share best practices, monitor trends, and advocate for our communities.

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

This year, Premier Danielle Smith came for a tour of Jessie’s House and attended our Charity Golf Tournament. This was an excellent opportunity for Premier Smith to learn more about the needs in our community and our work to create a future free of domestic violence for all individuals.

We continue to build relationships with elected officials at all orders of government to advocate for the needs of our clients.



☰

## April Is Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. It's time to focus on the safety and well-being of children in our community and across Alberta.

Child abuse takes many forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect and exposure to family violence. Recent statistics from Alberta show that neglect and exposure to domestic violence continue to be significant issues affecting children across our province. The impacts of these experiences can be lifelong, affecting mental health, relationships, and overall well-being.

At the Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation, we understand that preventing child abuse starts with education, awareness, and community support. We'll share essential resources and information about preventing child abuse throughout April on our social media channels. Follow along to learn how to recognize signs of abuse, where to find support, and how each of us can help build safer communities for children.

If you suspect a child is experiencing abuse or neglect, please reach out immediately to Alberta's 24-hour Child Intervention Line at:

**1-800-638-0715.**

EXIT

Here are some excellent resources for more information and support:

- **Little Warriors**  
Little Warriors is an Alberta-based organization dedicated to preventing child sexual abuse through education and providing support for survivors with

## JMMF BLOG

The JMMF Blog is one avenue for advocacy, providing the opportunity to share about key issues that impact our work. Some examples from 2024 include advocating for ending domestic homicides, commemorating the 15th anniversary of losing Jessica Martel, and celebrating our community with A Love Letter to Morinville.



## SHARING THE NEWS

Did you know that META, the company behind Facebook and Instagram, blocks news sources in Canada? That means you may not have seen these recent news stories about our work. We use our website to gather news stories about JMMF and domestic violence in our community and share them with our followers. You can learn more at [jessicamartelmemorialfoundation.com/news](http://jessicamartelmemorialfoundation.com/news)

## JUSTICE SYSTEM AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The justice and legal systems are a particular interest of JMMF as we advocate to keep survivors safe. We also see opportunity for systemic change through the justice system by holding violent abusers accountable for their actions and keeping survivors safe. In 2024, ACWS released a documentary called Survivors Speak, which included Founder Lynne Rosychuk and Chair Christine Moore. This film shared survivor’s perspectives with the court system, with a call to action for change.

### Edmonton man accused of killing girlfriend had allegedly harmed her before. Her father is calling for change

Erin Kern, 30, was found dead in her Strathearn home in early February

Wallis Snowden - CBC News - Posted: Apr 07, 2025 5:00 AM MDT | Last Updated: 3 hours ago



Erin Kern was found dead in her Strathearn home in early February. She is the latest in a string of Edmonton women allegedly killed at the hands of their partners. (Submitted by Trevor Kern)

## IN THE NEWS



# Awareness

## 24 HOUR CRISIS AND INTAKE LINE

Our 24-Hour Intake and Crisis Line is often the first point of contact for survivors. We are proud to offer around-the-clock support 365 days a year in over 200 languages. In 2024, **we answered 2,573 calls** on our 24-hour Intake and Crisis Line.

## GIVE ME SHELTER

Last year, we were lucky to be chosen as a recipient of the 20th Global Give Me Shelter campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to raise funds to support our mission and vision, but it also provides exposure to the issues of domestic violence and the resources and supports available to a very large audience. In 2024, we raised \$14,185.

### Global Edmonton kicks off annual Give Me Shelter campaign



By **Jasmine King** • Global News

Posted December 4, 2024 8:14 am · Updated December 6, 2024 11:36 am · 2 min read



WATCH ABOVE (From Dec. 3, 2024): Dec. 3 is the launch of Global Edmonton's annual Give Me Shelter campaign. As Jasmine King explains, local shelters say it comes at a critical time – Dec 3, 2024

## SOCIAL MEDIA

We share about our work and domestic violence on our social media, with campaigns to highlight Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Family Violence Prevention Month, Sexual Violence Prevention Month, Pride, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and many others. Follow us on social media to learn more about our work and help spread the word!



## MEDIA

Traditional media serves as an opportunity to reach a wide audience with information about our work and the need in our community. In 2024, CTV Edmonton came for a tour of Jessie's House to learn more about how we work, and our interviews are part of a larger series of stories about domestic violence.



Domestic abuse shelter struggles and preventing abuse before it starts

# Community Engagement



## SIGNATURE EVENTS

We welcomed **51 GUESTS** to our 2024 Jessie's Crowns Reception at the JMMF Administrative Building.

We welcomed **220 runners and walkers and 30 volunteers** to the 2024 Break Free 5/10K Run & Walk

We welcomed **118 golfers and 32 volunteers** to the 2024 Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation Charity Golf Tournament.



## THANK YOU

We are continually awed by the support of our community. In 2025, JMMF anticipates operating costs of \$2.7 million to maintain our high-quality service delivery across all programs. While the government contributes \$1.6 million, this leaves a significant funding gap. Shelters like ours are chronically underfunded, and without a committed increase in government support, we turn to our community for help.



- Donations over **\$237,000**
- Gift in Kind: **\$34,621**
- Third Party Events: **\$37,447**
- Tim Hortons Smile Cookie: **\$63,120**
- JMMF Signature Events: **\$78,535**
- Gaming: **\$48,512**



In 2024, our combined community support efforts totalled more than **\$500,000!**

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS!



**Bruce & Cindy Mcpherson**



ST ALBERT CENTRE



# Education

## OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our Outreach Program provides support to community members who are experiencing domestic violence and follow-up supports to clients after they leave Jessie’s House. In 2024, we supported **126 adults and 117 children** through our Outreach Program.



## CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

Last year, we saw 40% more children than adults come through Jessie’s House. That’s approximately 17 children and youth every month. The Child & Youth Program supports kids connected to our shelter and outreach services. The program is about helping the whole family heal through family programming, and allows parents time to attend programs and appointments.





The Inspire Program is a trauma-informed, holistic program that nurtures social-emotional skills, healthy relationships, leadership, and cultural pride. In September 2024, the Inspire Program expanded to include a boys’ cohort, marking a pivotal step in JMMF’s commitment to engaging men and boys in the movement to end gender-based violence. This year, we offered the Inspire Program to **36 participants – 16 girls and 20 boys.**



**LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM STACY BUGA, STURGEON PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRUSTEE**

*The Inspire Program is more than just a program; it’s a lifeline for students and families in Morinville. It exemplifies the power of community organizations and schools working together to create positive change. The Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation’s commitment to addressing the mental health crisis and providing students with the tools they need to succeed is truly commendable. The program’s positive impact on student outcomes, family well-being, and the overall school community has made it a worthy recipient of funding through the Alberta Crime Prevention Grant. It is a shining example of what can be achieved through vision, dedication, and a genuine commitment to youth.*

**Stacy Buga, Sturgeon Public Schools Trustee**



# Education

(continued)

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

JMMF's Public Education team delivers presentations about gender-based violence and our work to schools, service clubs, and community groups. Topics addressed including consent, bullying, healthy relationships, family violence, and where to seek help. Last year, we reached an additional **282 students** (grades 8-12) through public education at schools.

## SHARING BEST PRACTICES

JMMF presented about serving men at the Diverse Voices Conference in November.



# Safe Housing



## JESSIE'S HOUSE

This 9,000sqft 11 room, 35 bed all-gender emergency safe house provides security to individuals and families who are fleeing domestic violence. In 2024, Jessie's House provided safety to **149 adults and 208 children**. On average our clients stay in shelter for 31-60 days.

This year is the 5th anniversary of Jessie's House! Since opening the doors in 2020, we have provided safety to **751 adults and 782 children**.

*On behalf of Sturgeon County, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Jessie's House on your 5th anniversary.*

*Over the past five years, you have provided a vital safe haven for individuals and families fleeing domestic violence, offering not just shelter but hope, healing, and the chance for new beginnings.*

*Your trauma-informed, inclusive approach and unwavering commitment to serving our community have truly saved lives and inspired change. Thank you to everyone at Jessie's House for your compassion, dedication, and the difference you make every day. We are proud to stand with you as you continue this essential work.*

*With gratitude and admiration,  
Mayor Alanna Hnatiw*



## JESSIE'S ADVENTURE PARK

In 2024, we broke ground on a new playground for the children who stay at Jessie's House. Jessie's Adventure Park provides a safe place for our kids to play outside during their stay.

Thank you to our generous sponsors who made Jessie's Adventure Park possible!

- Break Free Run
- CJMD Foundation
- Community Donations
- Government of Canada  
Enabling Accessibility Funding
- Realtors Community Foundation
- St Albert Community Foundation
- Tim Horton's Smile Cookie

## EILEEN'S PLACE

Eileen's Place is the home of our second stage housing program. This program offers a 6-24 month stay for survivors who need extra time to accomplish their goals. Eileen's Place opened in April 2024, and we housed **3 adults and 9 children in 2024**.



# Financials



## FUNDERS

### ACWS

Alberta Seniors, Community, and Social Services

Alberta Children and Family Services

Alberta Arts, Culture, and Status of Women – Gender-Based Violence Prevention Funding

Canada Alberta Job Grant

Canada Summer Jobs

Edmonton Realtor’s Community Foundation

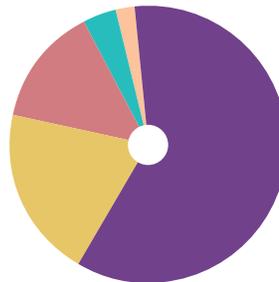
Eileen Labonte Foundation

St Albert Community Foundation

Sturgeon County

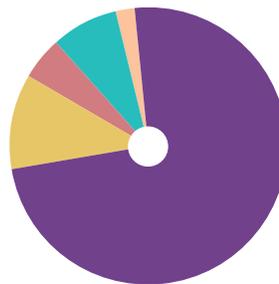
Sturgeon County FCSS

United Way Front Line Agency Funding



## 2024 FUNDING SOURCES

- 60% Grants – Government
- 20% Grants – Community
- 14% Community Giving
- 4% Fundraising
- 2% Interest



## 2024 EXPENSES

- 74% Wages & Benefits
- 11% Administration
- 5% Direct Client Costs
- 8% Facility Costs
- 2% Professional Fees

