WOMEN'S RURAL RESOURCE CENTRE

# 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

THROUGH THE STORM

#### THE YEAR EVERYTHING CHANGED

The entire world is still processing what happened in 2020. WRRC is no different. WRRC's executive director and chair of the board reflect on the challenges, and the lessons learned.

How does one sum up the year that was 2020? The year everything changed. The year that challenged us in ways we could never have imagined. The year that tested our limits and pushed us towards a breaking point. In 2020, the ground was constantly shifting beneath our feet; every day brought new information and walking a straight line became impossible. And yet, through it all, WRRC and shelters across the country stood strong. We knew that this pandemic would disproportionately affect our most vulnerable populations. And staggering statistics are confirming that women and their families had never been in a more dangerous, or precarious position.

So WRRC did what we and women around the world always do: We adapted. We challenged. We overcame. 2020 may have been the year that everything changed, but it also became the year of ingenuity. Of creativity. Of resilience. Of learning. Our entire team, and the women, families and community we work with delved deep into a strength we never could have imagined. For WRRC, we hold 2020 with deep pride, love and connection.

Corez, Attlison Jane McGregor Executive Director Chair of the Board

#### The Research Shows:

When lockdown restrictions started in Ontario, and around the world, shelters prepared for an onslaught of crisis calls, space for beds, and an overall demand in services. However, in many cases, the complete opposite happened. Experts working in shelters knew the rates of gender-based violence had not decreased. Instead, being forced to shelter in place with their abusers meant that survivors were unable to safely connect with services. This meant that gender-based violence advocates around the world had to regroup, and re-think how services were delivered - now and in the future.

Source: A Pandemic within a Pandemic – Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19: Megan L. Evans, M.D., M.P.H., Margo Lindauer, J.D., and Maureen E. Farrell, M.D.

#### **OUR MISSION**

Using a feminist, anti-oppressive analysis, we provide education, prevention, and support services for women and families impacted by violence against women in Middlesex County.





#### OUR VISION

A vibrant, connected community where women and children can thrive in healthy relationships.

### What Changed?

There's almost no program at WRRC left untouched by the impacts of COVID-19. We expanded our online resources and capacity to make sure our team could reach out to women and families in need in a safe, reliable way. We became creative in where and how we met women to safety plan. Health and physical distancing requirements forced us to reduce our capacity to three bedrooms, and provide hotel lodging for any other woman and children who needed safe respite. We delivered many of our services virtually, while our residential team never left the shelter. Our doors and phone lines were open to women through the entire pandemic.

We partnered with other organizations and implemented a prevention and safety campaign to let friends, family and neighbours know how they could help someone experiencing gender-based violence – specifically during COVID-19.

Our fund development program continues to exceed expectations, and in a year where many were unemployed, it grew. We stopped allowing in-kind donations, made major changes to our Holiday Hamper program, and yet, it was our most successful year to date. While many things changed, one remained the same: WRRC's doors were open to anyone who needed support.









#### Children's Program

#### 102

The number of children served



#### Counselling

95

The number of women served

972

The number of counselling hours

#### Shelter

21

The number of women served

25

The number of children served

#### Transition

146

The number of women served



## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**1.65** M

1.55 M

**TOTAL EXPENSES** 

\$229,693