

2020
2021

ANNUAL REPORT



SEXUAL ASSAULT
SUPPORT CENTRE
OF WATERLOO REGION

OUR MISSION

We support survivors of sexual violence.

We listen, facilitate healing, and celebrate resiliency.

Using an intersectional feminist approach, we work to transform systems which promote gender-based violence.

SASC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020–2021

Susan Prange, *President*

Lisa Evans, *Vice-President*

Melanie Baker, *Secretary*

Caroline Kim, *Treasurer*

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Gulin Aydin

Kourtney Beckman

Leah Bremner

Brenda Halloran

Rebecca Knapp

Beisan Zubi

Highlight of Services

24 Hour Support Line and Online Chat Support

Our 24 Hour Support Line and Online Chat Support is available to anyone who has experienced sexual violence. With phone support available in more than 50 languages, these services are supplemented by accompaniments to the hospital, police station and courthouse.

Counselling, Advocacy and Support Groups

Our counselling program includes individual counselling for people who have been sexually assaulted recently or historically, as well as support for friends and family. We also offer group counselling, workshops, practical assistance, and advocacy.

Family Court Support Program

This program provides practical and emotional support to women who have experienced violence in their relationship as they navigate the Family Court System. This program provides support with system navigation, information, referrals, and accompaniments.

Anti-Human Trafficking Program

This program provides wrap-around services to those experiencing sexual exploitation and those at significant risk. Support includes counselling, advocacy, crisis support, safety planning, accompaniments, practical assistance, support through legal processes, support with housing, connections to community supports, public education, and outreach.

Public Education Program

This program educates for social change! We provide workshops and resource materials to schools, professionals, the community, and beyond. This program also houses our Male Allies Program, which invites and trains men to be allies in the work to prevent gendered violence.

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SUSAN PRANGE
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

Letter from the President

DEAR FRIENDS:

As the outgoing President, how do I encapsulate the last seven years with SASC? In a year like no other, how do you possibly summarize what has happened in the last 12 months, let alone all the changes in the last seven years?

When I started on the Board with SASC, nine staff members were working out of an incredibly small space on the second floor of 151 Frederick St. The passion, the drive and the commitment of the staff, volunteers and board to do everything they could, putting the needs of survivors at the forefront, was a clear driving vision. What had started as a 24 Hour Support Line had grown to be so much more and was continuing to grow right in front of my eyes.

Now, we have 24 staff members working in a range of programs including our 24 Hour Support Line, Online Chat Support, individual counselling and advocacy, groups and workshops, Family Court Support Program, Anti-Human Trafficking Program, and our thriving Public Education program which includes our Male Allies program. All of this contributes to one of the largest Sexual Assault Support Centres in Ontario – if not, the largest. I am humbled to say I was a small part of this transformation and growth.

The passion of the staff, volunteers, and board has for this work has changed the agency for the better. We have been tasked with increasing demand for several years, roadblocks, challenges and rising needs. At each roadblock or challenge, including the most recent one with a global pandemic, I have seen the staff, volunteers and board roll up their sleeves, put their Rosie-The-Riveter bandana on (literally and metaphorically) and get to work.

I cannot even begin to express how this time with SASC has affected me. While I am stepping down from the board, I am not stepping away from SASC. I will remain an advocate, a donor and a voice for SASC.

Please join me in thanking SASC by volunteering, becoming a donor, being an advocate, attending events (safely as allowed) and/or through social media.

Sincerely,

Susan Prange
President, Board of Directors



SARA CASSELMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Letter from the Executive Director

DEAR FRIENDS:

Resilience. In its simplest sense, it refers to one’s ability to bounce back. To be resilient means to be able to withstand, adapt to, and overcome hardships. In some cases, it can mean finding a path that leads to a stronger position. In our work at SASC, we talk a lot about the incredible resiliency of the survivors who walk through our doors.

Reflecting on a full year of the COVID-19 pandemic, resiliency is also the word that comes to mind when I think of our team. At the start of the pandemic, the research told us that gender-based violence in our community would increase, as would the need for wellness supports for survivors. Already stretched in the post-#MeToo era, our caring team set to work - supporting and advocating for clients, working towards social change, and re-envisioning fundraising strategies – while navigating the impact of COVID on their own lives.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, we saw a 13% increase in requests for individual counselling, a 26% increase in clients in our Anti-Human Trafficking Program, a 51% increase in clients in our Family Court Support Program, and a whopping 628% increase in survivors accessing our Groups and Workshops Program.

Given this reality, we’re especially grateful to the individuals, businesses, partners, and funding bodies that stepped up and stood by our side. We’re a community-based Sexual Assault Support Centre, and despite the isolation of this year, we felt that community more than ever. Here are few moments that stand out:

- Communitech called, seemingly out of the blue, to say they’d raised over \$40,000 for us through their “This Too Shall Pass” campaign.
- We had a balloon bouquet delivered from Social Venture Partners, saying SASC had been selected as their 2020 Investee, kicking off a three-year relationship of support!
- With sponsorships from local businesses and pledges from individuals, 100 local superheroes dressed in costume for our Virtual Halloween Fun Run, and ran, walked, hiked, 5K across Waterloo Region in support of SASC.

Because of so many people’s generosity and steadfast support, I’m pleased to say that we continued to expand our services and grow our team this year, especially towards the end of the fiscal year. We ended the year in a surplus position, which will help us maintain and grow our programs into 2021-22; we remain committed to addressing rising numbers of survivors on our waiting lists.

Please continue to stand with us, and with survivors, as we weather this storm. To borrow from our friends at Communitech, this too shall pass! Until then, let’s work to wrap survivors in Waterloo Region in our collective care.

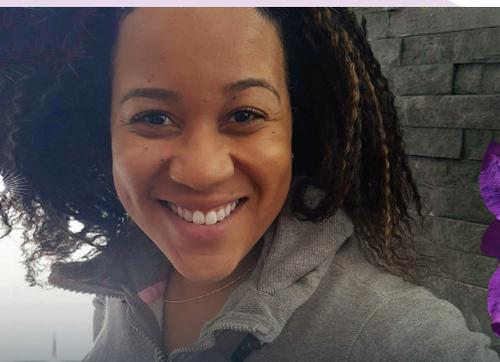
In gratitude and solidarity,

Sara Casselman
Executive Director

“She stood in the storm and when the wind did not blow her way, she adjusted her sails.”

– ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Statistical Highlights



Recognizing 20 Years of Supporting Survivors:

Our Thanks to **Andrea-Arthur Brown**

Strong. Fierce. Courageous. Empathetic.

Those are just a few of many wonderful ways that we would describe Andrea Arthur-Brown, our Director of Services.

This year, Andrea passed an incredible milestone of 20 years of service at SASC. Throughout the years, Andrea has become a true pillar at SASC. She raises up all of us – survivors and colleagues alike.

We wish to extend our deep and sincere gratitude to this valued member of our team. Andrea makes us better. Here's to 20 years of facilitating healing, hope and resilience!

Become a
Monthly Donor!

Sign up at
sascwr.org/donate

You are not alone!

Sexual Assault Services

24 Hour Support Calls and Online Chat Supports	1586
Survivors in group sessions	808
Survivors receiving individual counselling	590
Individual counselling/advocacy sessions	3503
Practical assistance provided	81

Anti-Human Trafficking Program

People receiving support	128
Survivors under the age of 18	57
Survivors under the age of 24	85
Family members of survivors	24

Family Court Support Program

Survivors receiving support	189
Safety Plans	73
Court Accompaniments	39

Across Services

Public education workshops	383
Participants receiving public education	10,722
Hours worked by volunteers	10,689

Program Reports



BY JEN LOVE

TEAM LEAD, COUNSELLOR/
ADVOCATE

Counsellor Advocate Program

Without missing a beat, last March the counselling team moved our services to remote for two weeks to flatten the curve. 15 months later we continue to reach our clients by phone, Zoom, and email. Almost without exception, clients' struggles have intensified during this period. Global instability together with lack of security in relationships, employment, housing, finances, health, support systems, and the very infrastructure of our lives do not lend well to mental health. It is almost inevitable that the current conditions complicate healing for those with unresolved traumas. Zoom fatigue, isolation and collective stress are real and we'd be remiss to not acknowledge that the pandemic has impacted our team as well. As we have carried our pandemic burdens, counsellors continue to show up for our clients, tapping into the insights, empathy and creativity that this current period has nurtured in us as counsellor/advocates.

We wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't help reframe the narrative. On that note, we have observed some silver linings of this precarious time:

- Clients who face barriers to attending in-person meetings have easier access.
- We have had fewer missed appointments.
- As a team, we have demonstrated creativity in advocating for clients remotely.
- We have benefitted from the greater availability of remote professional development opportunities including webinars to hone/adapt our skills and deepen our understanding of what our community members are facing and experiencing.

Most notably, we grew our counselling team from 5 to 9 counsellors by the end of year, greatly increasing the number of clients we serve moving forward.

Not even a global pandemic can stop us from showing up and supporting survivors!

"The amazing staff at SASC have been vital to me during the ongoing pandemic emergency. Their services have helped me tremendously with the stress and anxiety of going through the COVID-19 crisis. My counsellor has offered online and phone support, which allows me to maintain my security net during this period of increased stress. SASC has offered one-on-one counselling as well as group workshops. Being able to continue my counselling as normal and have additional support for the current situation has been so valuable to me." – SASC SERVICE USER, 2021



you
are
not
alone!



JENEKA JOHNSON

GROUP AND WORKSHOP
COORDINATOR

Group & Workshop Program

With the mandating of social distancing in the past year, SASC has encountered a surge in the need for non-judgmental, trauma-informed, restorative spaces where survivors can gather online to share, foster togetherness and feel affirmed in their trials and triumphs.

Despite being new to this role, I've been fortunate enough to experience the tenacity and advocacy that survivors continue to exude and offer, only solidifying the importance of connection and collective healing. By listening to their stories and suggestions, the groups and workshops program has been elevated to heights that wouldn't have been possible without the power of community. Here are some standout moments throughout the past few months:

- With the use of an intersectional-feminist lens, SASC has been able to offer a variety of workshops that serves the masses, including a 2SLGBTQIA+ support space and several series for BIPOC survivors and past clients.
- The Friday check-in (Alone Together) offered weekly peer-driven discussions and a sense of stability for survivors in a time when uncertainty set the precedent for everyday life.
- By migrating to a virtual space, SASC was able to lean heavily into accessibility as more community members were able to utilize online resources and attend groups and workshops from the comfort of their own homes.
- By the end of this fiscal year the Groups and Workshops program will have produced over 100 workshops better equipping more than 500 survivors with the tools to move through their traumas.



"Thanks for all the work you do to make the drop in a safe place for everyone. You've been doing such an amazing job" – **GROUP PARTICIPANT**

"I've tried out a bunch of other groups since starting this one (alone together), and it's allowed me to see a range of different styles and efficacies of facilitating, and none of the others I've attended has been as good." – **GROUP PARTICIPANT**

"Looking forward to the next group support session. Thank you for creating such a safe space." – **GROUP PARTICIPANT**



BY NICKY CARSWELL

COORDINATOR, ANTI-HUMAN
TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

Anti-Human Trafficking Program

Despite the very real challenges of COVID-19, we have had another busy and successful year within our Anti-Human Trafficking Program. With increased demand for our services, we were able to expand our services as the fiscal year drew to a close.

With support from Canada's Department of Women and Gender Equality starting April 1 2021, and our existing funding from the Province, we were able to grow our team to include three full-time Counsellor/Advocates, plus other supporting staff assisting with Family Support and Public Education. With this increased capacity, we plan to continue to provide support, counselling, advocacy, outreach, practical assistance, and public education within and outside the region. We also plan to address the housing gap and secure supportive options for survivors of sexual exploitation and trafficking.



Today is our third anniversary! I met you three years ago today. It was a stepping stone in my life; I'll always be grateful for everything you've done for me and continue to do for me. I'll never forget. – **SASC SERVICE USER, 2021**



BY JESSICA ST. PETER
MANAGER, PUBLIC
EDUCATION PROGRAM

Public Education Program

Public education has looked differently in the past year. Our incredible team of educators, Adjei, Chris, Paul and Sarah have embraced the “words of the year”. Through “virtual” means, our violence prevention work has adapted, endured and excelled because of the Public Education Team’s impeccable resilience in continual “pivoting”. In addition to educating, raising awareness and dedicating their time to creating a future free of sexual violence and oppression; our Public Education Team grew, mentored and inspired future educators, with the addition of two placement students, Courtney and Sateasha.

This year, we received multi-year funding from the Canadian Women’s Foundation to expand our Empower program. Under the leadership of Sarah Wiley, Violence Prevention Educator, Empower and Allyship engages youth of all genders in conversations related to healthy relationships and gender-based violence.

Community collaboration, partnership and outreach is a vital aspect of our Public Education Program, and in partnership with the YWCA of Cambridge, Paul Sauder, Male Allies Educator, has utilized their ability to engage youth and young men in our Male Allies Program. From puppeteering to video facilitation, Paul has engaged our youngest audiences this year in vital conversations.

The workplace has shifted for many companies and Chris Martin, Workplace Educator, has utilized the virtual platform to engage many new companies in corporate educational opportunities via our #RaisetheBar program. Chris’ leadership with #RaisetheBar continues to be recognized locally and nationally.

Our Male Allies Program welcomed Adjei Scott, as our newest Male Allies Educator. Adjei’s passion and skills have been a great addition to the team. Male Allies virtual training engaged over twenty new male allies to volunteer, mentor and model male allyship against gender-based violence in our community and beyond.

We express appreciation for the financial contributions of community partners, donors and funders. This vital work would not be possible without a strong commitment to assuring the resources are available for our Public Education staff, students and volunteers in continuing the imperative work of ending sexual violence and oppression.

“Chris is direct and makes participants feel comfortable. He works hard to keep participants engaged and does an incredible job of this even in virtual sessions.” – #RAISETHEBAR CORPORATE TRAINING PARTICIPANT

“This was a fantastic presentation. Sarah was very patient and knowledgeable. Thank you for being able to present what is typically a triggering subject for me, in an extremely comfortable and educational way.” – RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE TRAINING, COMMUNITY PARTNER PARTICIPANT

“Jessica St Peter & Sarah Wiley, were both engaging, empathic, knowledgeable, sensitive, informative and excellent in sharing the info and answering all questions. They shared relevant life stories and delivered the info in a manageable and understandable way. They spoke in a language that suited the audience.” – TRAUMA INFORMED SUPPORT TRAINING, UPWITHWOMEN COACH

“Important information conveyed, in a sensitive way and in a way that students could relate; great facilitation of discussion in a remote environment, allowing students to feel comfortable participating, and to feel heard when doing so. The facilitators had a warm presence. Thank you!” – EMPOWER AND ALLYSHIP, WRDSB TEACHER

“The presenters were wonderful - they were kind, open, and met individuals where they were at. They challenged in a polite and kind way when supporting the stories or thoughts of others.” – CONSENT CULTURE, POST-SECONDARY STUDENT

“The way the sessions were facilitated was the perfect balance of guiding and providing tangible teachings, tools, etc., and letting the group flow, and share its learnings horizontally. Bravo!” – MALE ALLY TRAINING PARTICIPANT

“Even a group of largely CIS, white, hetero men have a lot of the medicine in them already, to start the healing, all we need is the right pokes, prods and guidance.” – MALE ALLY TRAINING PARTICIPANT

97% of post-evaluation survey respondents would encourage others to attend the public education session they attended.



BY KAT ROSSI
FAMILY COURT SUPPORT
WORKER

Family Court Support Program

This year, the Family Court Support Program faced new challenges, with supporting clients through COVID-19 and the many changes the pandemic brought to our court system. We worked hard to keep our clients up to date on the changes to court procedures as they were happening, providing workshops for clients and community agencies on how to access legal services during this time. We also adapted our services to be able to support women virtually through phone and video appointments and attending court dates via phone and video conference.

Unfortunately, with the pandemic there has been a rise in domestic violence in our community, which we have seen mirrored in our program through the number of new referrals we received, and also the increased service needs of the clients we already supported. To support the growing demand for services, we expanded our team to have two staff members in the Family Court Support Program.

For the upcoming year, we hope to be able to continue growing our program to fit the needs of the community.



"You did everything for me when I have difficulties. I have been knowing many people since my sad happen, of course, I'm thankful to them, however, you are the best what I have. Thank you so much." – SERVICE USER, 2021

"Thank you so much and I have to tell you that I'm so happy that I have you to speak with and help me throughout this process; it really means the world to me" – SERVICE USER, 2021



BY STEPHANIE HUNTE
VOLUNTEER AND INTAKE
COORDINATOR

Support Line and Volunteer Program

This past year has been amazing! Our volunteers continue to support our community through our 24-Hour Support Line, Family Court Support and Public Education programs, as well as on our Fundraising Committee and our Board of Directors. Without the dedication of our 90+ volunteers, we wouldn't be able to provide the services and support that is fundamental to our community.

The demand on our 24-Hour Support Line specifically, continues to grow as our incredible volunteers took a whopping 1,276 calls this year! Having the increased capacity to take calls from last year has made an impact. Through the two volunteer training sessions that were completed in 2020-21, and with two more scheduled for this year, we hope to grow our capacity even more. Our limits are endless if we keep working together.

Since the April launch of Online Chat Support, we have seen it grow from only a few hours a week to 5 days a week! It has shown to be helpful for survivors who cannot access our services in the traditional ways and continues to grow, hopefully to weekend coverage in the upcoming year. Again, the program wouldn't be possible without our volunteers.

Overall, this year has been about continuing to do what we do best: support our community, especially through times of great stress. None of this would be possible without the empathy, integrity and support of our volunteers.



"I called your support line and I wanted to say thank you, for listening to me and helping me understand what happened to me wasn't my fault. You helped me realize some things. I appreciate you." – SERVICE USER, 2021

"Thank you so much for your help, patience and understanding today." – SERVICE USER, 2021

SASC Volunteers in 2020–2021

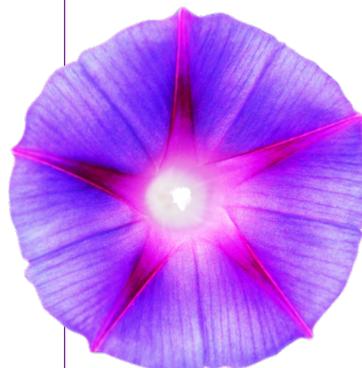
We're inspired by the dedication and compassion of our volunteers, who play a vital role in the delivery of many of our services.

VOLUNTEER MEMBERS

Alanna Zuber	Jennifer Ullrich	Rachel Seath
Amanda Vinette	Julia Lumini	Rebecca Courvoisier
Amber Patchett	Kari Hueber	Reid Nold
Aysegul Bagci	Kate Blackman	Rosie Samra
Bianca Boboc	Katie Montague	Sakana Gnanasegaram
Briana Cunningham	Keren Mann	Sara Fazal
Caitlin Cull	Laura Black	Sara Graham
Caitlyn Japersaud	Laura Coakley	Savannah O'Donnell
Cassie Myers	Leah O'Reilly	Shannon Zintel
Christina Parke	Madison Harper	Sofia Troop
Cindy Gosso	Maia Norman	Sophie Whitcomb
Danielle Tobert	Marwa Dabbagh	Stephanie Ernst
Daphne Cecil	Maureen Long	Sunny Mei
Dawn Freingruber	Melissa Matthies	Suyang Yoon
Deborah Strauss	Michelle Meggs	Tamara Buckley
Emily Faiola	Nancy Schnarr	Tara Innes
Emily West	Nichole Mader	Thanuja Selvanayagam
Emma Kehoe	Nicole Walker	Tiffany Chen
Heather Powers	Nikki Ramsoomair	Trishia Eby
Ingrid Pellew-Berkeley	Nithya Abraham	Victoria Seng-Low
Jay Michaud	Olivia Yu	Xenia Kwan

MALE ALLIES VOLUNTEERS

Anthony Saldutto
Chris Harrison
Kurt Dutfield-Hughes
Mike Hyde
Nic Saville
Scott Calway



SASC provides so many critically important services for survivors of sexual abuse. Volunteering gives me an opportunity to lend a helping hand – just to be there to listen, to support, to encourage. While it can be difficult to hear the stories from survivors, it is also so inspiring to see the strength and resilience people have as they work to heal themselves. – MAUREEN LONG, SASC VOLUNTEER



Collaboration Highlights

Our Centre collaborates with regional and provincial partners to prevent and respond to sexual violence and to enhance our presence in the community. This year, members of our team were active on the following committees:

Anti-Human Trafficking Working Group – Ontario’s Ministry of Education



Connectivity Cambridge



Connectivity KW4



Domestic Assault Review Team of Waterloo Region (DART)



DART’s Health-Engagement Task Force

KW United Family Court Community Resource and Liaison Committee

Sexual Assault Response Team of Waterloo Region (SART)



SART’s Anti-Human Trafficking Sub-Committee

Sex Workers’ Action Network of Waterloo Region



SGBV Prevention Sub-Committee at Conestoga



WLU’s Sexual Violence Education and Action Group



WLU’s Sexual Violence Response Working Group

Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres (OCRCC)



OCRCC’s Public Educators Group

Parenting Alliance of Waterloo Region



The Rainbow Community Council



VAW Advocate Case Review – Waterloo Regional Police Service



Volunteer Managers’ Network



SASC Supporters in 2020–2021

Thank you to our annual funders, including:

Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General, for their support of our Sexual Assault Services, our Male Survivor Program, and our Family Court Support Worker Program.



Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, via the Provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office, for their support of our Anti-Human Trafficking Program.

Canada's Department for Women and Gender Equality, for their support of our Development and Communications Coordinator role.



Canada's Department of Justice, for their support of the #RaiseTheBar Program.

The Government of Canada via the Canadian Women's Foundation, for COVID-relief funds.

The Canadian Women's Foundation, for their support of our Public Education Program.



The Region of Waterloo, for their continued support of our Counselling and Public Education Programs.



The City of Cambridge, for their support of our Cambridge Counselling Program.



The Wilfrid Laurier University, for their support and partnership to ensure Counselling and Public Education is available to students on campus.



The University of Waterloo, for their support and partnership to ensure Counselling is available to students on campus.



The Conestoga College, for their support and partnership to ensure Public Education is available to students on campus.



The Ontario Trillium Foundation via the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, for our Public Education Program.



The Astley Family Foundation, for their ongoing support of our Male Allies Program.



The Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, for their support of our Group and Workshop Program.



The Cambridge and North Dumfries Community Foundation, for their support of our Counselling Program.



The United Way Waterloo Region Communities, for their general support of our programs.



The Social Venture Partners Waterloo Region, for their general support of our programs.



The YWCA-Cambridge and the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, for their support and partnership in our Male Allies Program.



The Zonta Club of Kitchener Waterloo, for their support of client practical needs.



We also extend our gratitude to:

Communitech

Bob and Judy Astley

Pamela Dillon

Abundance Canada (Anonymous Donor)

Equitable Life of Canada

Harris Law, Personal Injury Lawyers PC

Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada

Fidelity Investments Canada

Patene Building Supplies

Cambridge North Rotary Club

Graham Mathew Professional Corporation

570 News, 96.7 CHYM FM, Country 107.6

Waterloo Region Crossing

Bob Bender Design

Marketing Magic



Last, but not least, we thank:

All the amazing individuals and businesses in our community who generously supported our work this year!

Graphic design for this annual report by Bob Bender Design / bobbenderdesign.com

you
are
not
alone!



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Charitable Registration Number: 132274093RR0001