



Annual **REPORT**

2023-2024



**VICTIM
SERVICES OF PEEL**
Help. Healing. Hope.



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Message from **THE BOARD CHAIR**

IT is hard to believe that I am approaching my second year as Chair of the Board for Victim Services of Peel. While it has been a very productive year, it seems to have flown by. It has been my honour to serve alongside my fellow volunteer Board members, who demonstrate professionalism and exercise prudence in the governance work of the organization.

During the past fiscal year, the Board focused on developing the organization's Strategic Plan, shoring up policies and procedures, and working on our By-Laws to ensure compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, S.O. 2010, c. 15.

The Board is also extremely fortunate to work with such a passionate and entrepreneurial Executive Director, leadership team, along with dedicated staff and volunteers. We are extremely proud of the numerous innovative projects and service adjustments; Sarah and VSOP team have implemented to increase services and improve outcomes for victims and survivors.

The agency has also worked tirelessly to support community initiatives and expand our partnerships with other organizations to offer a seamless transition for victims and survivors.

To our volunteers, staff, Board members, donors and funders, thank you for your hard work, unwavering support and commitment to ensuring that victims and survivors receive the services and care they need when they need it the most.

Respectfully,



Carson M. Coughlin
Chair, Board of Directors

Message from **THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

AS we emerge from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have set our sights on new horizons, laying the groundwork for the future while we celebrate our many successes this year! The 2023-2024 fiscal year has been a testament to our resilience and adaptability, as we invested time and energy into new initiatives while examining and improving existing ones. We are excited to embark on executing our new strategic plan, which will chart our path forward as we move to improve and expand services for victims and survivors.

Early in the fiscal year, Victim Services of Peel established a Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) committee comprised of management and front-line staff. The committee drafted a statement of commitment to REDI, which was approved by the Board of Directors.

The committee also established a road map and concrete plan forward to ensure that Victim Services of Peel incorporates the principles of REDI throughout all its policies and procedures, operations and at all levels of the organization.

Another significant achievement was the establishment of a new anti-human trafficking project called This Way Out →. Funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada for three years, this project is trauma and survivor-informed and based on promising practices of integrating Anti-Human Trafficking Crisis Counsellors within the Vice Unit of Peel Regional Police. The project focuses on helping victims and survivors navigate their way out of their trafficking situation. This often comes at great risk and involves complex issues and navigating many bureaucratic systems. Even in the short time of the project's operations, its impact on client's lives are already apparent. Together with our external evaluators from Collective Results, an Ontario-based consultancy firm, we have submitted an abstract for publication based on the early results of the project. *Continued on next page >>*





Victim Services of Peel is extremely proud of the multi-year Building Safer Communities partnership projects, established in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. First is the partnership project with Indus Community Services, Roots Community Services and Peel District School Board. This project, funded by Public Safety Canada through the Region of Peel will work to address youth gang violence through youth outreach activities in Peel District Schools and after-hours support. Second is a partnership project with Our Place Peel, Peel District School Board and Associated Youth Services. This project will deliver prevention and leadership workshops to youth in the community and Peel District School Board as well as provide a continuum of care to youth who are involved or at risk of engaging in gun and gang violence.

In the latter part of the fiscal year, Victim Services of Peel was asked by MCCSS to deliver sexual assault care (SAC) services for the region as an interim measure. Victim Services of Peel was ready and able to assist with this request. Sexual assault survivors can receive walk-in services at the Safe Centre of Peel, in the community where they feel most comfortable, or virtually.

Victim Services of Peel was thrilled the Coordinator of the South Asian Family Enrichment Program (S.A.F.E.), Roohina, received the 2023-2024 Victim Services Award of Distinction for her outstanding contributions and advocacy for women and children fleeing abusive relationships. We are so proud of Roohina for this great achievement.

It has been another busy, productive year, full of new developments and progress. None of it would be possible without the dedication of our outstanding staff, volunteers, Board members, community partners, donors and partners. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every person who contributed to the success of our organization.

Yours truly,

Sarah Rogers

Sarah Rogers
Executive Director



Tara's **STORY**

Tara and Kamal were married back home. After one year apart, Tara was overjoyed to start her life with her husband, even though she had no family or friends in Canada. Kamal had a good job and was able to sponsor Tara.

Tara and Kamal had a good marriage at first, but they had trouble getting pregnant. Kamal kept saying it was Tara's fault and he was upset to marry an infertile woman. After 18 months of trying, Tara got pregnant. That's when things took a turn for the worse in their marriage. Kamal seemed to be angry at Tara much of the time. Her cooking wasn't good enough, her cleaning wasn't good enough, her hair was too loose and her clothes were not right. As hard as Tara tried, it seemed there was little she could do to please Kamal.

When Tara was 3 months pregnant, Kamal was livid that Tara picked up a used crib placed on the curb of the road by a neighbour. He took a frying pan and smacked it against her belly with great force. Tara fell to the ground. She thought she would lose the baby. He apologized. He told Tara he loved her. He said he was very stressed. He promised it would never happen again. For a while, everything was good and calm, but the good times never lasted.

After Priya was born, Kamal would threaten to stop his sponsorship of Tara, send her back home and keep the baby. This kept Tara in complete control. She did whatever Kamal asked because she was so afraid of upsetting him, but something benign would always set off his temper.

Tara was beaten so many times, she suffered in silence for years, afraid to speak up or seek help. She feared for her daughter's safety too and worried about what would happen if she left. But then there was a particularly brutal episode and she just knew she had to leave or she would die.

During this particular brutal episode, Kamal strangled Tara until she passed out. When she came to, there was a police officer there, kneeling right next to her. Apparently, a neighbour had called the police. Tara knew this was the end for her. The police asked her if she wanted victim services. She did not understand English so she just nodded. *Continued on next page >>*

Tara's **STORY**



Tara was in the hospital waiting to see the emergency doctor when Crisis Counsellors from Victim Services of Peel arrived. One spoke Tara's language! The Counsellor told her they would help her and Priya. While Kamal was being held temporarily by the police, the counsellors accompanied Tara and Priya home. Tara had no money, no friends or family in Canada and all the shelters were full. The counsellors waited as Tara gathered and packed her belongings she would need for a few days. Victim Services of Peel would take care of her hotel stay funded by the Victim Quick Response Program and the Client Emergency Fund established with donated funds to help victims in situations like Tara's.

The counsellors called and prepaid for a taxi to the hotel. Victim Services of Peel crisis counsellors also gave Tara gift cards for food and a cell phone so she could call Victim Services of Peel any time day or night or call 9-1-1- in case of emergency. The next morning, the Crisis Counsellors called her and told her about Kamal's bail conditions.

Over the next several weeks, Victim Services of Peel worked hard for Tara and Priya. Victim Services of Peel helped Tara

access emergency funds through government programs. They also got her in touch with a legal aid lawyer who helped Tara obtain a restraining order, temporary custody of Priya and residency in Canada. With Tara not being employed, the high rental prices, and scarcity of social housing, made accessing housing the biggest hurdle for Tara. The transitional housing team at Victim Services of Peel passionately advocated for Tara and Priya. It took over six weeks, but finally, Victim Services came through with rent geared to income rental unit she could call her own.

From the moment Tara was in touch with Victim Services of Peel, her life began to change. Victim Services provided her with a safe place to stay, away from Kamal's reach. They connected her with counsellors who helped her navigate the trauma she had endured. Tara learned about her rights and options. She was determined to take control of her life.

It wasn't an easy journey. Tara faced challenges and setbacks along the way, but she never gave up. With the unwavering support of Victim Services of Peel and her own resilience, she transformed from a victim into a survivor.

...from the moment Tara was in touch with Victim Services of Peel, her life began to change.



Who **WE HELP**

15,124

total clients served
(all programs)

7,970

total Intimate Partner
violence and family
violence victims served

1,035

total Sexual Assault
victims served

106

total Human Trafficking
victims served

1,216

total served who
experienced tragic
circumstances

446

total served by
Transitional Housing
support

7,298

total Bail Hearings

413

total women and
children assisted
through SAFE Program

374

total people assisted
through High-Risk
Services

Our **PROGRAMS**



The Victim Crisis Assistance Program helps individuals and families in the immediate aftermath of crime and sudden tragedy. The program provides portable crisis intervention, emotional support and urgent assistance to victims 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

South Asian Family Enrichment (SAFE) Program – provides intensive case management, and advocacy services to support South Asian victims of domestic violence and their children. This program is designed to help victims live free from violence. In 2023-2024, the SAFE Program developed and tailored over 200 individualized safety plans and helped 413 women and children flee violence in their homes.

The Bail Court Program helps victims stay fully informed on bail hearings and bail conditions. On behalf of victims, VSOP staff and volunteers advocate with crown attorneys regarding the setting of bail conditions for violent offenders. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, VSOP staff and volunteers attended 7,298 bail hearings on behalf of VSOP clients, kept clients informed of bail conditions and helped clients plan for their safety.

Transitional Housing and Support Services helps victims of intimate partner violence, human trafficking, stalking and other violent crimes to access safe and affordable housing. The housing worker works with clients to find safe and affordable housing, fill out all the required forms, as well as gather and organize documents. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the program helped 446 victims and their children access safe affordable housing.

Volunteer Program provides the backbone to many of our programs and services. In 2023-2024 over 100 Victim Services of Peel Community Volunteers contributed close to 10,000 hours of service.

Safe Centre of Peel (SCoP) Victim Services of Peel is a vital partner in the multi-organization partnership initiative to provide integrated wrap-around services to victims of intimate partner violence and their children in partnership with over 19 community partners. The agency provides on-site crisis and safety support around the clock, 24/7.

Our Staff and volunteers were able to provide services in more than 20 languages

Our **PROGRAMS**



Victim Quick Response Program Plus, is a funded by the Government of Ontario and is a means of last-resort program that pays for emergency expenses for crime victims. Some of the expenses include transportation, addiction treatment, counselling, food, accommodation, cell phones, emergency dental and more.

Client Emergency Fund is created with generous donations and grants. This funds pays for emergency expenses for victims of crime and tragic circumstances, which are not covered by VQRP+, and there are no other resources available to pay for such expenses. Some of the expenses covered by the client emergency fund include transportation, food, accommodation, mobile safety devices, and more. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, VSOP spent \$35,400 in emergency client expenses. Many thanks to (alphabetical): BPW Brampton, J.P. Bickell Foundation, Mississauga Community Foundation, Pendle Grant, and the Zonta Club of Brampton-Caledon for your incredible contributions.

NEW PROJECTS 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR

Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, funded by the Brampton And Caledon Community Foundation Covid Recovery Grant to establish a foundation and road map for a concrete plan forward to ensure Victim Services of Peel incorporates the principles of REDI throughout its policies and procedures, operations and at all levels of the organization.

This Way Out→ is a three year anti-human trafficking project funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada. The project is a survivor informed project that builds on the promising practices of integrating crisis counsellors within the Vice Unit of Peel Regional Police to ensure victims and survivors have immediate access to care.

WRAP (Wellness Response and Assistance Program) is a new project funded by the Region of Peel to build capacity in providing counselling services to victims experiencing mental health crises who are in receipt of OW or ODSP.

Averting Crisis through Culturally Responsive Supports and Navigation for Youth is a three-year partnership project with Indus Community Services, Roots Community Services and Victim Services of Peel to conduct outreach and provide 24/7 support to youth who are at risk of joining gangs. The project is funded by the Region of Peel.

iRise, funded by the Region of Peel, is a three-year partnership project with Our Place Peel, Associated Youth Services, Victim Services of Peel and Peel District School Board to conduct outreach, intervention and prevention through education to youth who are at risk of joining gangs.

Our PARTNERS



PARTNERS



FUNDING PARTNERS



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Financial **SUMMARY**



REVENUE	2024	2023
Grants	2,212,885	1,678,224
Deferred capital contributions recognized	10,296	10,669
Donations, sponsorships and fundraising	374,140	191,564
Interest and other income	20,974	1,964
	<u>2,618,295</u>	<u>1,882,421</u>
EXPENSES		
Salaries and benefits	2,061,536	1,457,205
Staff training	51,038	13,150
Occupancy - rent/lease	7,099	7,099
Travel and communication	23,598	62,280
Allocated central administration	155,993	139,533
Promotional goods and materials	-	-
Community workshops/meetings/events	-	386
Office equipment/ supplies	74,102	66,333
Other program expenditures	152,039	110,706
Amortization	16,987	19,046
	<u>2,542,392</u>	<u>1,875,738</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses \$	75,903	\$ 6,683

Our **BOARD**



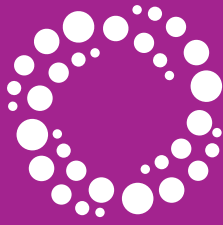
2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive

Carson Coughlin, Chair
Doug Rajala, Vice Chair
Robin Jones, Treasurer
Scott MacBean, Corporate Secretary

Directors

Joy Brown
Kerry Lee Crawford
Gay Longo
Arun Mathew
Rebecca Miller-Small



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SERVICES OF PEEL**
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Charitable #

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