

# Dixon



transition **society**

shelter, guidance, & hope  
for women & children fleeing violence



## Annual Report 2016-2017



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# Our Work



## **Vision Statement**

Women and children are free from violence

## **Mission Statement**

To raise awareness about and to provide a continuum of services including safe housing, support, counselling and education for women and children impacted by violence

## **Our Values**

Respect- celebrating individuality and diversity  
Trust- providing an environment of safety, confidentiality, and security  
Acceptance- freedom of choice and unconditional support  
Education- increasing awareness of the issues and impacts of violence against women and children

# Our Work

Dixon Transition Society provides a continuum of services to women and children escaping violence. Services include a safe haven through our Transition House, Second Stage and Third Stage housing programs, Counselling, and Housing Outreach. Raising awareness about the root causes of violence against women, and working towards eliminating gender-based violence, complete our continuum of services.

Operating in Burnaby for the past 44 years, our comprehensive services support women from the crisis stage of arriving at our Transition House to when they live safely and independently on their own. Our incredible and passionate team welcome the women and children with open arms and our generous donors ensure the families we serve feel the love and support of the community.

**Dixon Transition House:** Dixon House is a ten-bed safe house for women and their children who are fleeing violence. Women receive support and advocacy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in a secure home environment. The Child Support Worker also helps both mother and her children adjust to their new surroundings and begin the process of healing.

**Wenda's Place:** Individual supportive housing units where women and their children who have passed through the initial crisis stage may stay up to two years. Our program is designed to assist the women achieve their goals and provide children with opportunities for growth and learning.

**Third Stage Housing:** Safe and affordable housing for women and their children who have recovered from their initial trauma and are ready to live more independently.

**Housing Outreach:** Housing support for women and their children who are in the process of leaving any of our housing programs. Outreach staff work closely with the women to assist them in their search for safe and affordable housing and connect them with their new community.



**Stopping the Violence Counselling:** Professional individual and group counselling for women in Burnaby who have experienced violence in their relationships, sexual assault, or childhood abuse.

**Family Counselling:** Professional counselling and therapy for low-income residents of Burnaby who have children or are otherwise directly involved with raising children.

# Message from the Chair of the Board

The 2016-2017 year has been one of exploration for all of us at Dixon. I have learned that non-profit organizations go through cycles, and currently, we are at a point where we have the opportunity to review and make decisions about what our future looks like. The staff and volunteers are always looking for ways to serve more women, and so we have been exploring new programs and possibilities for expansion.

The possibilities are endless but ultimately, we want to ensure the services we provide to our current clients continue to reflect the high standards we set here at Dixon. Accordingly, we are carefully reviewing the feasibility of different approaches. Can we expand our physical services? Should we focus on providing more information and expanding our website and other public resources? How would we fund additional services? These are questions we have been discussing at length, and while we don't have the answers yet, I can assure you that we have a very committed group of people exploring the risks and rewards of these and other options.

Thank you to the fantastic staff who provide support, resources and a very caring environment for our clients; the important work you do gives them a chance at a new beginning.

Thank you to our wonderful Executive Director, Pany Aghili, who is constantly looking for ways to improve the lives of our clients.

Thank you to my fellow board members who donate their time and skills to support the mission of Dixon Transition Society. Also, thank you to outgoing board members Lisa Lacamel and Helena Rebec for volunteering their time with the board over the past year. I am completing a two year term as Chair of the Board and am confident that I am handing over the reins to a group of committed, professional individuals.

Respectfully,

Gill Sherwood, Chair of the Board



# Executive Director's Report

It is my pleasure to provide Dixon Transition Society's 44th annual report.

The 2016-2017 fiscal year was a milestone year for Dixon Transition Society. In our last year of the three year strategic plan, we celebrated the organization's success in providing high quality services and came to the consensus that Dixon Transition Society is ready to enter its next phase of evolution.

Unfortunately, in the year 2017, the work to end gender-based violence is still necessary, and the services we provide continue to remain essential. Violence against women as a means to control and limit women's opportunities is still not discussed in the context of misogyny and the patriarchy that support its perpetuation. Acts of violence against women are discussed in isolation from the societal values and conditions that put women at risk. It is within this social context, yet with hope for what the future holds, that Dixon Transition Society plans for its priorities. While we strategize for the next life cycle of our organization, our core commitment remains to be providing essential services and working to educate the community on both the root causes of, and impact of gender-based violence on our society.

Our work is not possible without the ongoing support of the Province of BC, the City of Burnaby, the United Way of Lower Mainland, and the generosity and commitment of our donors, volunteers, and staff. Your support is what makes providing comprehensive services a possibility. The courage and resiliency of the families we serve is what inspires us to learn, tackle challenges and welcome opportunities to better serve our community.



I also would like to take this opportunity to thank our Counsellor, Elizabeth Herman, who is retiring on June 30th. Elizabeth has dedicated 22 years of service to this organization and the community. Elizabeth, your energy, wisdom, and leadership will be greatly missed. Thank you for all of your contributions to Dixon.

To the day when we can celebrate equity and safety for everyone.

Respectfully,

Pany Aghili, Executive Director

# Our Impact

IN 2016 - 2017



2,178  
CALLS FOR SERVICE



1,215  
WOMEN AND  
CHILDREN TURNED AWAY DUE  
TO LACK OF SPACE



276  
WOMEN AND  
CHILDREN HOUSED



558  
CLIENTS SERVED



53  
WORKSHOPS AND  
GROUP ACTIVITIES



1,133  
COUNSELLING SESSIONS



107 VOLUNTEERS  
1,945 VOLUNTEER HOURS

# Our Impact

## S.'s Story

“What I appreciate about Dixon is we could stand on our own two feet to get our life back, individually and independently”

With only \$10 with her when she arrived, Dixon staff drove her to the bank to set up her own account, helped her navigate income assistance and other government services in her new country, coached her in English speaking and guided her through the criminal justice system.

“I was not alone,” S. said. “I was backed up by an army with big hearts and generous hands.”

S. was thankful for a program that not only housed her, but also empowered her with skills to regain a sense of normalcy and independence.

“What I appreciate about Dixon is we could stand on our own two feet to get our life back, individually and independently,” S. said. “They taught us skills and gave us support, but it was still my life and I was the one making the decisions.”

Today, S. speaks and writes in English fluently and is taking required courses to go onto post-secondary education to work in the medical field. She is living independently and safely with her two children.

“When I arrived, I had no family and no friends in BC or even in Canada. When I was there I said, ‘I feel like I am in my own home.’”

**Read the entirety of S.'s story and those of several other resilient Dixon clients on our website at : [dixonsociety.ca/our-impact/stories](http://dixonsociety.ca/our-impact/stories)**



# Program Reports

## Transition House and Wenda's Place Report



Our Transition House, Dixon House, provides immediate safe shelter for women and their children who are fleeing from abuse and violence. Understandably, when the women and children first arrive, most are in a state of crisis experiencing several emotions at once. Feelings of confusion, sadness, overwhelm, and relief are common. After their first night at the Transition House, most women tell us that this is their first time sleeping through the night because they felt safe to do so. Other women say that they now have dreams instead of nightmares.

Living at the Transition House can also be difficult for the children we serve. That is why our summer student, along with our Child Support Worker, organizes fun outings and in-house workshops for the children residing in the House. The summer students work tirelessly to fundraise so that mothers and children can attend activities and events they normally would not be able to afford on their own.



Additionally, like every year, in large part due to our generous donors, Christmas was a magical time for the women and children in the House. For some, this was their first time celebrating Christmas or receiving gifts.

Our Second Stage program, Wenda's Place, provides housing for women and their children who need support while living independently. By offering affordable and supportive housing, Wenda's Place gives women the opportunity to return to school, seek employment, and begin their journey towards healing.

Wenda's Place recently opened the summer recreation program to children living in our Third Stage housing program. We also introduced youth-only activities as the current resident demographic includes several teenaged children. Additionally, we can provide children assistance with their homework and other school activities because of our dedicated tutors who volunteer their time.

Another exciting program that Dixon Transition Society is proud to be a part of is Reaching Out with Yoga (ROWY). ROWY, piloted and offered through BC Society of Transition Houses, provides our clients with the opportunity to partake in in-house yoga classes that are delivered using trauma-informed techniques. Women participating in these yoga sessions are supported with the management of physical pain, effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, and overall stress.



Collaboration is key to the success of our work and in order to best serve our clients, we have developed strong working relationships with other organizations in our community. These partnerships increase women's safety and facilitate easier access to services for our clients.

# Program Reports



At Dixon Transition Society, staff feel grateful and privileged to provide programs and services to women and children who come to us under difficult circumstances. These courageous women and children continually demonstrate strength and resilience despite the adversity and barriers they face, and we consider it an honour to serve them and support them in their journey.

We are also so thankful for your time and partnership in helping us create and maintain a safe, healing, and comfortable environment for our clients. Our work would not be possible without the continued and vital support from volunteers, donors and the community.

**Claire Kalfon, RSW, Manager, Operations & Services**



## Housing Outreach Report

This past year, the Housing Outreach Program has continued to assist our women and children with the often arduous task of rebuilding their lives from the ground-up and most importantly, free from the fear of violence.

Since stepping into this role last year, I have gained a new appreciation for the value of this program. Each family receives help that is tailored around their unique needs and goals, which is not only effective but empowering. However, one significant challenge within this process has been navigating through Vancouver's all-time high housing crisis, in which we now see everything from a falling turnover to lack of adequate affordable housing units. Unfortunately, these external factors can apply significant pressure on women to return to their abusive situations. Despite these difficulties, we have experienced countless successes with numerous women accessing Second Stage housing programs, securing permanent affordable housing, but most importantly, finding the confidence to start a new life.

With the support of our staff and other community resources, this program has proven to be incredibly meaningful and worthwhile. I am privileged to be in this position and excited to see the Housing Outreach Program continue to expand and support the families in our communities.

**Jasmine Roh, Housing Outreach Worker**



Art Work by the children in  
Dixon Transition Society's  
Programs

# Program Reports

## Stopping the Violence Report

Our STV Program has a new Counsellor! I am excited to introduce, Anna Bell, as our new STV Counsellor. Anna has been working as a Woman Support Worker at Dixon House for the last year. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this role.

I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to be in the role of STV Counsellor supporting women who are residents of our housing programs, as well as women from the community. In working with the women, it is important that they have autonomy over their decisions, and that they know they are the experts of their own lives. In other words, the counselling relationship has to provide an environment of safety, respect, and confidentiality. Both Anna and I practice from the belief that each woman has a story, and her lived experiences are unique.

I feel honoured and privileged that the women who came to see me in my capacity as the STV Counsellor entrusted me with their personal stories. They shared a part of themselves that they may not have with anyone else. These women embody courage and determination. They taught me the meaning of perseverance and quiet strength.

**Claire Kalfon, RSW, Manager, Operations & Services**

## Counselling Program Report

At the very beginning, Dixon Transition Society had just a small counselling program for women, mostly single mothers, who needed support with their roles as parents. Today, the program serves both women and men, as well as adolescents, couples and families living in Burnaby. About 95% of current referrals come from social workers of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, as per our mandate.

My last day as the Clinical Counsellor of this counselling program will be June 30, 2017. Upon my departure here at Dixon, I am excited to announce a new Counsellor, Liz Moss, will be stepping in to take the program to new heights and ensure its legacy continues.

**Elizabeth Herman, M.A., RCC, Family Counsellor**



We thank our incredible and amazing Counsellor, Elizabeth, for her 22 years of service to families in the Burnaby area. Over the years, she has helped many clients to change their lives for the better, but she has also been a leader at Dixon, generously sharing her knowledge and skills to support our work. We will miss you Elizabeth!

# Volunteer Spotlight

We have a plethora of amazing volunteers at Dixon Society. Each volunteer gives generously and willingly of their strengths and gifts and each support our staff and clients immensely. We'd love to introduce you to all 100+, but meet a few of the friendly faces who volunteer with us!



## Meet Tamara

### **What is your role with Dixon as a volunteer?**

I do the weekly grocery delivery and recently I've been an advocate for the House and helping to acquire needed items.

### **How long have you been volunteering with Dixon?**

8 months

### **What is your favourite thing about volunteering?**

I couldn't put into words how rewarding this is, all I can do is say thank you to Dixon Society for the amazing opportunities.

### **What quote, ideology or theme inspires you to continue to do what you do?**

I've only asked for three things to get me through the good and bad times: peace, grace, and strength

## Meet Helen

### **What is your role with Dixon as a volunteer?**

I am a Master Gardener, a Certified Horticultural Therapist and the Coordinator of the Dixon House Garden Project (one of a number of community projects with the VanDusen Master Gardeners). I currently have 7 volunteers who join me every Tuesday morning at Dixon House for a few hours of work in the Garden.

### **How long have you been volunteering with Dixon?**

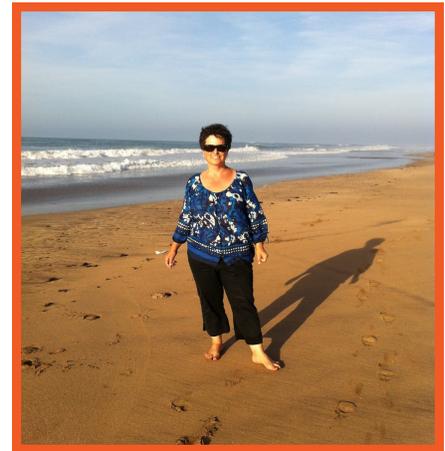
I started the project in 2001.

### **What is your favourite thing about volunteering?**

We work in the garden to create beauty and a sense of refuge for staff and residents. We like to encourage residents to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of horticulture and the natural world by joining us in the garden.

### **What quote, ideology or theme inspires you to continue to do what you do?**

"A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust." – Gertrude Jekyll



# Volunteer Spotlight



## Meet Rena

### What is your role with Dixon as a volunteer?

I tutor some of the fantastic women and children at the Transition House in mainly English but also math, science, Spanish, and more! I have also helped a couple with their citizenship test preparation.

### How long have you been volunteering with Dixon?

9 months

### What is your favourite thing about volunteering?

My favourite thing about volunteering is seeing the constant positive outlook most of the residents have on life and how I can try to help make their day maybe a bit brighter with a kind smile and attitude myself.

### What quote, ideology or theme inspires you to continue to do what you do?

"You never know what anyone has gone through in the last minute, hour, day, year of their life and all it takes is one second to extend a smile and change someone's day if even for a minute."

## Young Men Adventure Weekend

This generous group from YMAW dedicated their time and expertise and beautifully renovated our Transition House kitchen in summer of 2016! Thank you YMAW for all the hours you donated and thanks to G&F Financial Foundation & donors for your financial support.



If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with Dixon on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or even annual basis, get in touch with us! [operations@dixonsociety.ca](mailto:operations@dixonsociety.ca)

**A huge thank you to all of our volunteers this year!**

# 2016-2017 Highlights

## Scotiabank Charity Challenge 2016

We were thrilled to have a strong crew of runners and fundraisers join us for Dixon's second year participating in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge at the Vancouver Half Marathon and 5K. We raised over \$11,000!



## Christmas Jazz Concert 2016

For the fifth consecutive year, Brentwood Presbyterian Church so graciously hosted our Christmas Jazz Concert featuring Miles Black, Glenda Rae and Brett Wade. The event raised over \$4500! Mark December 3, 2017 in your calendar for this year's upcoming event!



## Women's March 2017

It was an important year for women on the global political stage. On January 21, Dixon staff and board members marched the streets of downtown Vancouver joined by tens of millions of people around the world in the first ever Women's March. Together we reinforced that women's rights are human rights and when women are safe, empowered, and included, societies thrive.

## Employment Support Program

With funding from Employment & Social Development Canada, we have started offering employment preparation support to women who accessing our services. This program is aiming to support women in regaining their independence and securing meaningful employment.

## UBC Reading Week Puppet Show

One of our favourite weeks of the year is UBC reading week! Students and families were paired up to write stories and make puppets. The project culminated in a performance of all of the puppet shows on the final evening. We thank Central 1 Credit Union and the RBC Make 150 Count initiative for funding the project.



# Our Supporters

100 Men Who Care- Vancouver  
Agra Tandoori Restaurant  
Ammara Dance Company  
Atlas Power Steering  
Barley's Homebrewing Supplies  
BCAA  
BCTH Enterprises Inc  
Big Brothers Renew Crew  
Brentwood Presbyterian Church  
Brett Wade  
Brix Media Co  
Browns Socialhouse- Brentwood  
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Burnaby Office of City Clerks and Legal  
Department  
Burnaby Public Health (Fraser)  
Burnaby Teachers' Association  
Canadian Women's Foundation  
City of Burnaby Planning Department  
Costco - Still Creek  
Dalila Spa  
Deer Lake United Church  
Delta Hotels Burnaby  
Dr. Sun Yat Sen Chinese Garden  
Easy Park  
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Fortinet Tech  
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PNE Community Relations  
Parish Of St. Stephen The Martyr Thrift Shop  
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Relax Station Spa  
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TD Bank Staff  
Team TELUS Cares  
The Commodore Ballroom  
Vancity North Burnaby Community Branch  
Vancity Savings Credit Union  
Vancouver Foundation  
Vancouver Giants  
Warm Hearts Charitable Foundation  
Zone Bowling - Coquitlam

**Thank you to all of our  
supporters for their  
generous contributions!**

**And the many individual and  
anonymous donors...**

# Funding Support by:



BC Housing



**Ministry of Children and Family Development**  
**Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General**  
**Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch**



**United Way**  
Lower Mainland

**Department of Justice Canada**

**Service Canada-Canada Summer Jobs**



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