



  
Dixon

transition society

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

# Annual Report 2017-2018

*45th Anniversary Edition*

# Table of Contents

Our Work.....	3
Messages from Our Leadership.....	4-5
Executive Director's Report.....	4
Chair of the Board's Report.....	5
Manager's Report.....	5
Anniversary Feature.....	6-7
Program Reports.....	8-11
Transition House.....	8
Wenda's Place.....	9
Third Stage.....	9
Housing Outreach.....	10
Employment Support.....	10
Stopping the Violence.....	11
Family Counselling.....	11
Statistics.....	12
Stories of Resilience.....	13
Highlights.....	14-15
Volunteer Spotlight.....	16-17
Supporters.....	18-19
Funding.....	20



# 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



Pany Aghili  
Executive Director

*Executive Director's Report*

Last year was a busy but a significant year for Dixon Transition Society.

Offering a full continuum of services, with stretched resources, is no small task. We are proud to offer safe, clean and comfortable facilities as well as material items such as food and all the essentials for day to day living for women and children. As part of our role, we support women to navigate the system of services, act as advocates for families to have access to basic needs such as legal support and housing, work to ensure children have the resources they need, and that clients have access to qualified staff, counsellors and an array of workshops to support them in their journey to rebuilding homes free from violence. I am extremely proud of our staff for their efforts toward several additional key projects this year and the time and energy they required.

One of these projects is Project Impact; a program offered through United Way of Lower Mainland designed to help non-profits measure their impact. We engaged in extensive research about the impact of our Second Stage program. The process required a significant commitment in resources, but the rewards of hearing directly from the women we serve energized us and kept us motivated. Taking the time to sit down with 20 current and former clients for individual interviews proved inspiring as they told us about Dixon's role in their journey and what our services meant to them. Our conversations reminded us that women are resilient, they are capable, and all they need is access to equal opportunities and safety.

We are humbled to walk alongside these incredible women in their journey to healing, and it filled us with enthusiasm to plan, dream, grow, and continue to ensure we meet the needs of the families we serve.

In addition to Project Impact, Dixon engaged in comprehensive dialogue and planning and created a roadmap towards meeting our strategic priorities of increased name recognition and a more focused communication strategy. We have likewise equipped our staff to better engage the community and increase awareness of not only our services but also the societal issues that contribute to violence against women.

As we enter our 45th year of service, we are energized, focused and committed to serving our community to the best of our abilities. We remain dedicated to our service provision while holding accountable offenders and systems that perpetuate the cycle of abuse and make domestic violence a horrific reality for many women and children.

Thank you to our incredible staff, to our dedicated volunteers including the Board of Directors, and other members of the society. We are also grateful to our funders and many generous donors. Families and women and children escaping domestic violence have a safe place to live and access to holistic programs because of your dedication.

Respectfully submitted,

Pany Aghili, Executive Director



Naveed Nadri  
Chair of the Board

*Chair of the Board's  
Report*

It's been a successful year for Dixon. As part of our three-year strategic plan, we explored opportunities to expand and assess our current programs and services, as well as enhance employee wellness, and improve self-reliance. This has resulted in a focus on financial stability and diversity, enhanced workplace satisfaction, awareness and community partnerships, and excellence in programs and services.

This year, we were able to enhance our capacity at the Board and we have been delighted and honoured to welcome new members, Laura Morgan, and Taruna Agrawal in addition to existing members, Gill Sherwood, Kuldip Taggar, Jane Banham, Narges Nirumwala, Crystal Johns and Anita Webster. They bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise to the Dixon Board. Thank you for generously donating your talent, time and energy to support Dixon. Unfortunately, Gill, Crystal, and Kuldip will not continue on as members of the Board of Directors. Thank you for sharing this journey with us.

The health, stability, and strength of Dixon is a testament to the work of our staff and volunteers. Thank you to our talented, experienced and caring Executive Director, Pany Aghili, and dedicated Dixon staff for their commitment to supporting the women and children we serve. Thanks also to our funders for making services possible, and to our donors and volunteers for their continued belief in the work we do to support women and children fleeing violence. We are guided by the trust that has been put in us by our supporters and more importantly, by the families we serve.



Claire Kalfon  
Manager of Operations  
and Services

*Manager's Report*

This year, I moved into a new position and role as Manager of Operations and Services. My new role allows me to provide better support to staff and to put in place systems and practices that best support staff and in turn the women and children that we serve. Providing regular staff training and regular clinical support sessions are just two of the ways that the organization promotes a healthy workplace.

One of our goals for this year was to expand on our learning and service delivery using a trauma-informed practice. Adopting a trauma-informed approach means we recognize how trauma can affect women mentally, physically and spiritually. We understand the impact of trauma and violence on women's lives and behaviours and work to provide a healing environment that addresses both their emotional and physical needs. For example, we focus on their strengths over weaknesses, and we acknowledge survivors of violence are strong and resilient. Through our transitional housing programs, we provide physical safety but by working within a trauma-informed framework, we can also pay attention to survivors' emotional safety.

We continue to provide holistic services to the women and children that enter our doors seeking a safe haven. It is rewarding to receive feedback from the women on how our services have impacted their lives. Hearing the success stories of women and children make our jobs even more rewarding than they already are. I feel truly blessed to be part of an organization that puts the clients we serve at the forefront of our mission and vision by providing a chance for the healing process to begin.

This year we could not be more excited to be celebrating 45 years of Dixon. We are proud of the milestones we have reached over the years.

# 45 YEARS



An "in-home" counselling program was started.  
Registered as a non-profit society on January 3.

The Board negotiated to open a shelter for women  
and children who are impacted by violence.

Opened the first emergency shelter in Burnaby for  
abused women and their children.

The Outreach Program was established to provide  
home visits and return visits to the shelter.

The Marguerite Dixon House was established to provide  
named after one of the founding women.

The Second Stage program  
was instituted.

1973

1979

1982

1984

1985

1994

Our growth and success would not have been possible without the collective effort of our volunteers, board, sponsors, and staff.



# 50 YEARS



Life Line Society changed its name to Marguerite Dixon Transition Society.

The Stopping the Violence Counselling program was founded.

The Transition House received funding to operate 24 hours, 7 days a week.

The Society updated its logo and changed its name to Dixon Transition Society.

Second Stage moved into Wenda's Place, a new facility named after one of the founders.

The Third Stage program was created.

2000

2005

2007

2009

2009

2009



## Our Programs

### Transition House

Dixon House provides immediate safe shelter for women and their children who are fleeing from abuse and violence. Women receive unconditional support and advocacy 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in a home-like environment. Families can stay at the transition house for up to 30 days.

### Program Report: Jennifer Oh, Transition House Coordinator

At Dixon House, we support families with the immediate crises after leaving their homes, whether it be securing income through Income Assistance or Employment Insurance, obtaining Legal Aid to access legal services, making referrals to counselling programs, or collaboratively planning with the family in order to ensure their safety.

Within our programs, women often report that they feel like they found a family away from their families. Dixon House becomes a source of support for women not only when they are staying in our programs, but also when they have moved. Many women and children come back to visit for emotional support and for donations, but many also visit to share their stories of resiliency with us. For example, one woman came back for a visit and shared with us that whenever she comes back to visit Dixon House, she feels that it's like coming back to her mother's house because of the warmth and love shown to her and her children.

### A special thank you: Mary Daly

Our hats are off to longtime Dixon House Program Coordinator, Mary Daly, who retired in March after 24 years of service. Mary played an influential role in supporting the society in the transformation of our programs to what they are today. As mentioned, women often come to call Dixon "home," which can easily be attributed to Mary's caring heart and intentional leadership. We celebrate you, Mary, and are so grateful for the decades of support you gave.

## Wenda's Place

Wenda's Place Second Stage housing focuses on healing and breaking the cycle of violence. Wenda's Place provides individual housing units in a safe, supportive environment where women and their children may stay up to two years. After their time at Wenda's, families may move to our Third Stage housing. Our Third Stage housing program provides safe and affordable transitional housing for women and their children who are ready to live more independently. Those in the Third Stage program can continue to access supports and services from staff.

### Program Report: Lucia Stokovac, Program Coordinator

At Wenda's, our staff support women to achieve their goals and to develop necessary skills to live independently and self-sufficiently. The program allows women time to not only emotionally heal from past trauma, but to set goals and begin to plan what their life looks like moving forward, whether this includes going back to school, looking for a new career, or even discovering the resources available in their community. Services include individual and group counselling, structured activities for children, life skills coaching, and resource information.

Throughout this past year, Wenda's Place continued to expand our regular programming to include weekly trauma-informed yoga classes, tutoring sessions twice a week, and a monthly mindfulness group in partnership with our STV counsellor. In addition, Wenda's Place hosted a number of workshops including budgeting and financial literacy, family law, resume and employment support, and parenting support. These sessions are also open to families in our Third Stage.

We have also hosted several Days of Caring with community partners. These organizations generously donated their time to help garden, build furniture, organize, and paint.

It has been a privilege to hear about and celebrate each woman's strength, resiliency, and accomplishments. Wenda's Place provides more than just a safe place for women and children to heal from the violence they have experienced; Wenda's Place provides a sense of community and family for women and children.



## Housing Outreach

Housing Outreach program provides support to women and their children who are in the process of leaving Dixon's housing programs. Dixon works closely with the women to support them in their search for safe and affordable housing while connecting them with their new community. The program also supports former clients by connecting them to services and resources that allow them to continue to live thriving lives free from violence.

### Program Report: Jasmine Roh, Housing Outreach Worker

2017-2018 has proven to be an incredibly busy year for the Housing Outreach Program. Despite the steep challenge of finding safe and affordable housing in the Lower Mainland amidst an unremitting housing crisis for all BC residents, we have had the privilege to support numerous women and children find refuge at Second Stage housing programs, permanent subsidized housing and also in the private market. The women know all too well that rebuilding a life from the bottom-up takes an incredible amount of support. We appreciate donations that we receive from the community, from small items like coffee machines to larger necessities such as strollers. I can say firsthand that these donations have had an enormous impact on the everyday lives of the women and children. I am privileged to be able to help families thrive as they move forward with a violence-free life and a newfound sense of safety.



## Employment Support

From March to October of 2017, the employment support program was funded by Innovative Solutions Micro-grant from Employment and Social Development Canada. The program offered employment preparation support to women and supported them in regaining their independence and securing meaningful employment after fleeing violence. Employment support workers assisted women in addressing barriers they faced obtaining work experience or further education. Through our generous community partners and knowledge philanthropists, the program was able to provide various workshops geared toward computer and technology skills, resume-building, interview skills and more to enhance employability. With these partnerships and our learning, we hope to be able to raise adequate funds to run a modified model of this program as it is invaluable to the women we serve.



## Our Programs

### Stopping the Violence

The Stopping the Violence (STV) program provides individual counselling for women in Burnaby who have experienced violence in their relationships, sexual assault, or childhood abuse. Counselling services facilitate an understanding of the emotional and psychological responses to trauma as a result of abuse or violence.

#### Program Report: Anna Nabuco Bell, STV Counsellor

527 sessions this past year! It amazes me how much support Dixon's STV Program is able to provide. Each session brings an opportunity for clients to recognize the signs of domestic violence and to learn about the cycle of violence. This knowledge empowers the women towards a life free from abuse. As Dixon's STV counsellor, I support the women in making their own choices, reaching their own decisions and acting upon them how they think is best since they are demonstrating agency. I have a big smile on my face thinking about all the STV clients that in this past year bravely faced their fears and were determined to seek a better life for themselves and their children. I feel honoured for having these women share their stories and experiences with me. I would like to thank the hundreds of individuals and organizations in the community who support Dixon. I look forward to continuing to work towards our goal of ending violence against women.

### Family Counselling

The Family Counselling Program supports low-income families in Burnaby who are experiencing challenges within their family unit due to conflicts between the parents or between child and parent. The focus is to support families to improve how they interact with one another to create a safe, nurturing environment for their children.

#### Program Report: Liz Moss, Clinical Counsellor

During the last fiscal year, 608 sessions were provided to over 100 individuals, couples, and families. Last year saw the retirement of Elizabeth Herman who had run and supported the program for 20 years, and I was welcomed as the new Clinical Counsellor. The past year also brought with it the growth and healing of many individuals, couples, and families as they courageously faced their inter and intra-personal struggles in a supportive and therapeutic environment. Couples learn to hear each other and communicate their experiences and needs to their partners. Parents learn about the impact their own childhood traumas have on how they function and raise their children. Parents were able to begin healing their own wounds and thus better support their children. Children and teenagers found a safe place where they could voice their pains and struggles to their parents. It has been a year complete with challenges, successes, and new beginnings. I believe that the program is healthy and thriving, serving families to grow to their fullest potential.

10,706

Meals Provided

*Our  
Impact*

1,736

Calls For Space

1,128

Counselling  
Sessions

1,510

Ex-Clients  
Supported

219

Women & Children  
Housed

1,022

Volunteer  
Hours

2,155

Women & children  
turned away due to  
lack of space

442

Clients Served

124

Workshops and  
Activites

During Project Impact, we had the privilege of hearing how Dixon's services have impacted the women and children in our program. We asked women what they would tell someone who was thinking of fleeing violence and reaching out to a transition house. Here are some of the heartfelt responses we received.

"To all women who experience any kind of abuse or violence: I want to tell you that the Transition House is the safest place to go and ask for help. It is safe for you and your kids. It is a place that is highly secure and confidential. It was so worth staying in the Transition House, and now I see the world differently."

*"You can start your new life from here. You deserve better. You deserve to be happy and to not be scared of someone."*

"The Transition House is a very safe place with nice staff inside. They provide food, emotional help, and they work with you to help you get government help, income assistance or legal aid. They are only such as you, women with children. You will have your own room, or even two, for your family. The second stage is even an apartment building!"

*"I feel very welcomed and it feels like a heaven."*

"I already spoke with some mothers who were looking for support like they can get at Dixon house. I assured them this is a very clean and safe place. The workers are very supportive and friendly. You can get assistance with any questions, documents or problems. You will have a chance to learn English, take care of your kids, find a job, get a good rest and set goals for your beautiful future. Don't worry, it is very easy. Everyone is smiling here. **The Dixon House is the #1 place where you will find all the support you need for you and for your kids.** You can start your new life from here. You deserve better, you deserve to be happy and to not be scared of someone. Look at me: I am happy now, my kids are growing, we are living in a beautiful big house. I am a student at university, I am working. Thank you Dixon House."



## *Our Impact*

### *Stories of Resilience*



## Burnaby Board of Trade (BBOT) Golf Tournament

We were grateful to have been selected as BBOT'S 2017 beneficiary for their annual golf tournament. The event raised \$5000 for our programs and services.

## Scotiabank Charity Challenge

For the third consecutive year, we participated in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge. We had over 20 runners and shattered our previous fundraising records, crossing the \$15,000 mark. All of these funds went to our Housing Outreach program, one of Dixon's most unique programs, which walks alongside clients as they seek long-term housing in a competitive metro Vancouver housing market and work to build a new home for their family.

## Resilience

A grant from Department of Justice Canada allowed us to host a community event for Victims and Survivors of Crime Awareness Week 2017. We dubbed this afternoon workshop and celebration, "Resilience," to recognize the remarkable resilience of women survivors of violence. Front-line workers from around the Lower Mainland were invited for lunch and various local leaders in the sector gave presentations on trauma-informed practice.



## Christmas Jazz Concert

Our 6th annual Christmas Jazz Concert was the most successful one yet! Raising over \$5500, we were once again so humbled to be part of a fabulous show by local artists Miles Black, Glenda Rae, and Brett Wade. Thank you again to Brentwood Presbyterian Church for generously offering their space and connections.

## Dixon Diva's Benefit Concert

Thanks to our longtime friends at Brentwood Presbyterian Church, eight of Vancouver's most outstanding female jazz vocalists put on a show last May that brought down the house. We were honoured to be a part of this vibrant event and benefit from its proceeds, which totaled over \$6500.

## Project Impact

Each year, United Way of Lower Mainland connects local charities with a program designed to help non-profits measure and package their impact to the community. While the project will end in June of 2018, five Dixon staff members have been hard at work since November attending monthly cohort meetings and conducting extensive qualitative and quantitative research about the impact of our programs. Through this, we have been able to hear the stories of over 20 current and former Wenda's Place residents and witness the transformation that has taken place in their lives because of Dixon.



At Dixon, our volunteers prove to be the heartbeat of our organization. Each volunteer brings unique strengths and abilities to meet the needs of our house and clients. Their time is invaluable, and we cannot describe how meaningful it is to see local community members genuinely demonstrate their care for the women and children. We do not know what we would do without you! Here are a few of our dedicated volunteers from this year!

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Knowledge Philanthropists

We would like to recognize the organizations that volunteered their time to work with the women in our program over the past year. They have generously put on workshops and activities to share their expertise and services with the Dixon community.

**Thank you to Burnaby Fire Department, Burnaby Public Library, ABC Life Literacy, TD Bank, Peter A. Allard School of Law, Reaching out with Yoga, Diversity, Logan HR Consulting, Multicultural Family Support Services, Vancity, and Deanna Kayne.**



### Cheryl Hanson

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

I come every Monday morning to help upkeep Bea's Boutique—the donations room where the residents come to find clothing, bags, shoes, and other treasures.

**How long have you been with us?**

5 years. I was connected through my work, TELUS, during a Day of Service in 2013.

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

I enjoy the friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the house. I like to see that women are able to find things that they need to continue to rebuild their lives after violence.

**What keeps you volunteering with us?**

I like to get out and help others! As a career woman of 41 years, I benefit by engaging myself in work that is meaningful and with purpose.

## Megan Burnett

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

I am a Master Gardener trained through the VanDusen Master Gardener program. I currently volunteer every Tuesday morning at Dixon House for a few hours of work in the garden alongside my furry companion, Maya!

### How long have you been with us?

10 years.

### What is your favourite thing about volunteering?

I love interacting with the house and seeing the staff, women, and children each week. I get to see residents engage with the garden by helping us water and even pick and arrange flowers for staff. I can see how it adds a sense of peace, rest, and safety to the house.

### What keeps you volunteering with us?

I've seen the importance of volunteering and I've been raised to give back to our communities. Raising three boys, I've always volunteered throughout my adult life especially after retirement. I find it is meaningful and I like to keep active and engaged.



## Maya

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

My role is to give my owner, Megan and the Dixon House staff, women and children some company.

### What is your favourite thing about volunteering?

My favourite thing is when I get to play with the kids.

### What keeps you volunteering with us?

I love the carrots that the humans feed me!



If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with Dixon, get in touch with us!

[communityrelations@dixonsociety.ca](mailto:communityrelations@dixonsociety.ca)

We have many volunteer opportunities including Bea's Boutique, Grocery Shopping, Gardening, Career Mentorship, Tutoring and more. We would love to have you join us!

## *Gold Level Sponsors*

*\$1000+ or equivalent value*

Andrew and Crystal Johns

Burnaby Board Of Trade

Burnaby Firefighters Charitable Society

Colliers International

Fortinet Tech

FortisBC

Greater Vancouver Food Bank

Hamed Shahbazi

IBM

Matec Consultants Ltd.

Pan American Silver Corp.

Raymond James

Raymond James Canada Foundation

Real Canadian Superstore

Re-Food

Seth Allen

Tippet Richardson

Wal-Mart-Lougheed Mall

And the many individual donors...

# Thank you!



## *Silver Level Sponsors*

*\$250+ or equivalent value*

Ammara Dance Company

Anita Webster Communications

Alpha Technologies

Big Brothers Renew Crew

Blue Water Group

Burrowing Owl Winery

Canadian Women's Foundation

Deer Lake United Church

Executivespeak Coaching International

Rita McDonald Foundation

We Care 4 Your Community

Wooden Boat Food Co.

And the many individual donors...

## Bronze Level Sponsors

Aarcomm  
Arts Club Theatre Company  
Bard on the Beach  
BC Lions  
Belgard Kitchen  
Browns Social House- Brentwood  
Burnaby Heights Integrative Health  
Burnaby Village Museum  
Buy-Low Foods Burnaby  
Buy-Low Foods New Westminster  
Cactus Club  
Capilano Suspension Bridge  
Cartems Donuterie  
Cheesecake, Etc.  
Chevron Canada Limited  
Chez Christophe  
Cineplex- Scotiabank Theatre  
Commodore Ballroom  
Costco - Brighton  
Costco - Still Creek  
Costco- Richmond  
Crabtree and Evelyn  
Dageraad Brewing  
Deer Lake Boat Rentals  
Domino's Pizza  
FloatSense  
GardenWorks  
Harrison Hot Springs Resort  
Home Depot- Cambie  
JJ Bean  
JOEY Restaurants  
Jump Gymnastics  
Kids Up Front  
Knotz by Design  
Landmark Cinemas  
Lisa Lou's Chocolate Bar  
Mount Seymour



Mr. Plumber Inc.  
Museum of Anthropology  
Old Spaghetti Factory  
Panago Pizza Burnaby Heights  
PNE  
PriceSmart Foods Metrotown  
Proper Hair Lounge  
Purdys Chocolate  
Safeway- Austin Rd, Burnaby  
Save-On Foods Kingsway  
Save-On Foods North Road  
Science World of British Columbia  
Shoppers Drug Mart- Old Orchard Center  
Shoppers Drug Mart- Sapperton  
Silvercity  
SkyZone Trampoline Park  
SmartyPantz Entertainment Corp.  
Steamworks Brewery  
The Keg  
Thrifty Foods  
Vancouver Canucks  
Vancouver Christmas Market  
Vancouver Whitecaps FC  
Wesgroup Equipment LP  
Yaletown Brewing  
Yoga Wellness  
ZipTrek Whistler

And the many individual donors...

Funding Support By:



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



Department of Justice Canada  
Employment and Social Development Canada  
Service Canada-Canada Summer Jobs



Dixon Transition Society  
204-2101 Holdom Avenue  
Burnaby, BC V5B 0A4

Phone: 604-433-4191 Fax: 1-866-290-9044  
[www.dixonsociety.ca](http://www.dixonsociety.ca)