

WOMEN'S INITIATIVES FOR SAFER ENVIRONNEMENTS

INITIATIVES DES FEMMES POUR LA SÉCURITÉ ENVIRONNEMENTALE

Annual Report 2019 - 2020



The Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa / Initiatives des femmes pour la sécurité environnementale remercie sincèrement la Ville d'Ottawa de son soutien financier.



WOMEN'S INITIATIVES FOR SAFER ENVIRONMENTS: 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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Welcome to the annual report for Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments. We focus here on highlights of our work during the past year. It wouldn't be possible without the wonderful support from the community. Our thanks to you!

MISSION STATEMENT

Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE) is a community based bilingual organization established in 1992. We work directly with individuals, diverse communities, local government and agencies to create safer physical and social environments in our neighbourhoods, parks, workplaces, recreational pathways, and schools. We believe that if we make the community safer for women and other vulnerable groups, it will be safer for everyone.

MANDATE

- ❖ To act as a catalyst to foster the creation and sustainability of safe social and physical environments.
- ❖ To organize and conduct public safety audits from a feminist perspective, including the perspective of the full diversity of women and other vulnerable people in society.
- ❖ A safety audit includes attending a site; assessing safety issues; creating an action plan to address deficiencies and then follow up with stakeholders to monitor and encourage implementation of recommendations.
- ❖ We work to accomplish this mission by working with local government, communities, agencies and those seeking to create safer environments.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- We believe that violence against women is linked to women's inequality.
- Solutions to violence against women must be based in women's experience.
- We will work to make our organization and services completely bilingual.
- We recognize and respect the diversity of women's experiences, and will work to make our organization and services reflect this diversity.
- All of our work is developed in consultation with the community.
- We support other women's and anti-violence organizations.
- We will not duplicate the work of other organizations.

Organization History

In May 1990, a group of women met to talk about safety for women in the streets of Ottawa-Carleton. From the work of this small group came the Women and Urban Safety Committee. After a two-year community process, involving more than 200 women and men from across the region, the Women and Urban Safety Committee were granted core funding by the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. These funds were to establish and operate a local organization that would work to create a community that was safer for women. The original grant was for an 18-month period. We now receive funding from the City, to be approved periodically, and project funding from other bodies.

Choosing a name under which to incorporate the organization in 1992 was difficult. Our choice, the Women's Action Centre Against Violence (Ottawa-Carleton), named the issue as violence, clearly stated our focus on women's experience and our desire to create change. Keeping with that objective, and evolving with the changing community needs, the organization adopted a new name, to allow the community to more quickly grasp our mandate and purpose. We felt that this was best accomplished with a strong focus on the concept of promoting safety for women and everyone in our community. Hence, in 2002, the new name WISE, Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments. Along with the new name has come the development of many new initiatives from our organization to provide direct interaction throughout the city on all issues of safety.

Over the past 28 years, WISE has been very creative and productive. Staff, with input from volunteers and a dedicated working Board, has been producing quality work. The WISE organization has been able to give women and communities tangible solutions to combat the problem of violence and will continue to do so in the years to come.

Contact WISE at:

205-211 Bronson Ave.,

Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6H5

Telephone: (613) 230-6700

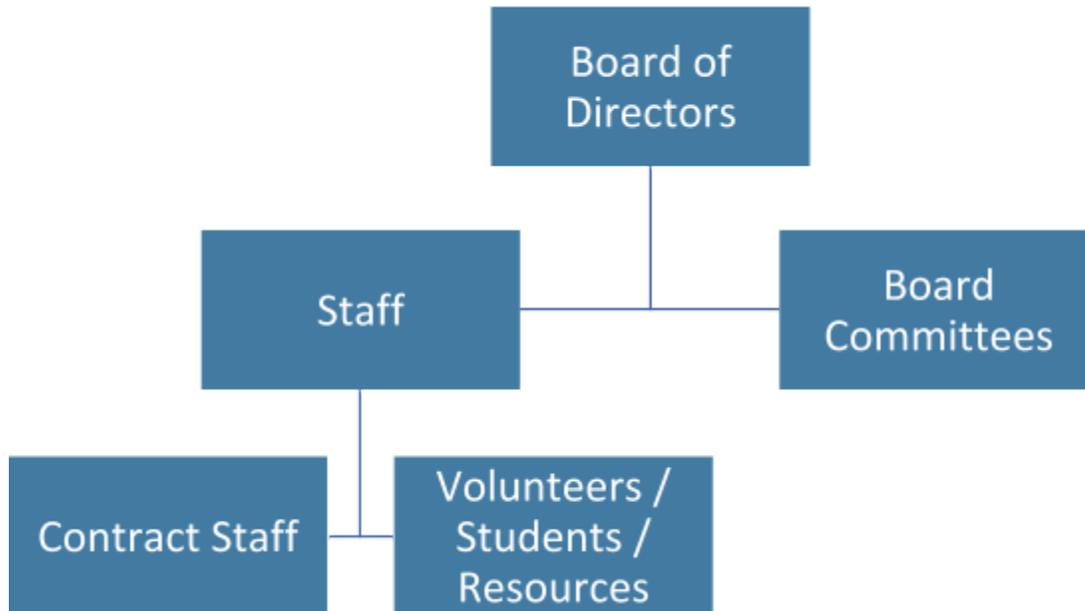
E-mail: info@wiseottawa.ca

Website: www.wiseottawa.ca

Twitter: @WISEOttawa

Facebook www.facebook.com/WomensInitiativesForSaferEnvironments

Organizational Structure



Board of Directors

WISE has been fortunate during 2019-2020 to have a wonderful board that has dedicated itself to offering policy direction and focus on celebration. Thank you all for your dedication and effort.

- ❖ Watt, Chloe - *Chair*
- ❖ Johnson, Christine - *Vice Chair*
- ❖ Desrosiers, Kristy-Lu - *Director*
- ❖ Rajani, Nasreen - *Director*
- ❖ Xiao, Kewei - *Director*



- ❖ Skutovich, Alexandra - *Director*
- ❖ LaPlante, Katherine - *Treasure*

Message from the Chair



Dear Partners and Supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present to you WISE's 2019-20 Annual Report.

This year has been a year like no other with the arrival of COVID-19 however, WISE has dynamically adjusted its offerings in order to respond to our new reality and has continued to achieve many successes that contribute to safer communities for everyone.

We have taken meaningful steps to ensure that our programs, policies, and procedures support equity, diversity and inclusion; have consolidated our visual image and brand; revised our strategic priorities; worked at forging new relationships with community partners while strengthening existing relationships; and have started Board and employee training on anti-racism.

WISE has continued to actively work with our sister organizations, community members and funders in order to bring awareness, empowerment, and enhanced safety measures to our communities. This has been supported through consultations throughout the year such as community consultations for Stage 2 of the LRT, site plan consultations for the proposed public library being designed for the Le Breton Flat area, and the City of Ottawa's Consultation on a new funding framework amongst others. WISE also penned a letter to the Mayor and Councillors advocating for a safe workplace for all city staff and particularly for political staff at the City for whom formal complaint mechanisms are not in place and leave staff vulnerable to unhealthy work environments. Following up on this letter, WISE participated in a consultation with the retained human resources firm that was retained to assess hiring practices at City Hall. In addition, WISE serves on the Safety Stakeholder Working Group with OC Transpo and many other agencies that seek to address Violence Against Women and has recently collaborated on

a piece regarding the requirement to wear masks on public transit. This piece outlined the potential backlash for those who are not able to wear a mask and advocated for free mask distribution.

We have continued to be an integral part of the Women's Events network which organizes Take Back The Night, the December 6 Vigil, and the ClothesLine project. Our regular programming such as the Community Safety Audits and Personal Safety Workshops have been complemented by workshops that aim to empower women. These workshops include Building Women Up, Women on Wheels, and Legal Education Workshops. Our Heroes for Tomorrow workshop which is geared to young boys to help understand masculinity and toxic messages and to provide a basic understanding of what violence against women is continues to be hugely successful.

In response to COVID-19 and evolving client needs, we have also developed new interactive programming such as a safety workshop for international activists working in dangerous environments, Zoom workshops for seniors on safety and coping with COVID, Virtual Safety Audits to help clients in dire threatening situations and for shelters who need advice about making their premises exteriors safer.

Though we are a small organization, we are active and committed to making Ottawa feel safer for everyone. I would like to personally thank our wonderful staff members Elsy David and Valerie Collicott, board members, students, and volunteers who have given their time and energy in making WISE an invaluable asset to the community. I would also like to recognize Hailey di Caita who filled in as Acting Director while Elsy was on a leave of absence. I have enjoyed working with all of you and look forward to seeing WISE continue to grow and achieve even more accomplishments in the coming year!

Sincerely,

Chloe Watt, Chair

Volunteers & Students



WISE worked with two young women this past term who carried out the practicums with our organizations. We were thrilled to work with Hailey di Caita and Qaila Walji, two Carleton University students. Qaila and Hailey participated in 'Safety Audits, workshops and doing research and preparing slideshows and presentations. It was a pleasure working with these two young women whom we are sure will go far in their careers.

WISE worked with a number of great volunteers this past year, including:

- ❖ Megan Macdonald
- ❖ Joy Morgan
- ❖ Nadia Awata
- ❖ Zoe McPeake
- ❖ Jason McLinton
- ❖ Devon Rupnarain
- ❖ Dena Kaplan
- ❖ Sarah Patrick
- ❖ Jody Doyle
- ❖ Steve Fischer
- ❖ Mehdi Jeeroburkhan
- ❖ Elizabeth David
- ❖ Ivi Iliriani
- ❖ Peter Ferri
- ❖ Daniel Rankin
- ❖ Mol Damiani
- ❖ Jill Collicott
- ❖ Andrew Collicott
- ❖ Lauren Duperron
- ❖ Arwa Kassamali
- ❖ Grace Haddad
- ❖ Jolly Johnson
- ❖ Tariq Anwar
- ❖ Catalina Cy
- ❖ Jody Doyle
- ❖ Jenna Spagnoli
- ❖ Kayla Spagnoli
- ❖ Sandra Milton
- ❖ Katie Oppen
- ❖ Ashlee Riedler
- ❖ Nicole Renolds
- ❖ Richard Altavista
- ❖ Mireille Brownhill
- ❖ Amarah Humayun
- ❖ Lauren Touchant
- ❖ Adam Wojcicki
- ❖ Hailey DiCaita,
- ❖ Terri Biggs
- ❖ Riyaz Bosi
- ❖ Rob Wilkinson
- ❖ Heather Lusk
- ❖ Paula Bernal
- ❖ Shannon Shrivastava
- ❖ Christina Ferguson
- ❖ Baldeep Kaur
- ❖ Shreyas Puthran
- ❖ René Torres

Volunteers took on various projects and programming responsibilities from conducting Safety Audits, supporting Personal safety Workshops, researching and designing new exciting interactive workshop modules, redesigning and updating social media platforms, helping organize community events and fundraisers, performing in WISE videos, to promoting WISE programming.

Thank you to all these wonderful volunteers!

Here are some of the ways you can contribute when you become a WISE volunteer:

- Join our Board of Directors.
- Sign up for a Community Safety Audit in your neighbourhood.
- Sign up for a Personal Safety Workshop.
- Help spread the word about booking a Heroes for Tomorrow Workshop for boys .
- Help advertise to book a Legal Education workshop for women.
- Represent WISE at community meetings, fairs, displays, and public events.
- Make a personal financial contribution.
- Donate to WISE through the United Way plan as your recipient of choice or on our website through Canada Helps.
- Help produce the WISE newsletter.
- Perform administrative tasks.

Fill out a volunteer application from our website or call us to arrange YOUR opportunity! Once you sign up as a volunteer, you are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES AT WISE

Did you check into our blog series this year? Board members have taken on writing blogs for our website and social media. Here are just a few of the topics we covered:

- *Immigrant women facing intimate partner violence: A view from the frontline*
- *ByWard Market Safety*
- *The work to end violence against women goes beyond the 16 Days of Activism*
- *Campuses need to do more to prevent sexual and physical assaults*
- *Job Searches and Personal Safety*

Keep your eye on our website for the latest blog on current topics.

Education Initiatives

Heroes For Tomorrow

Heroes for Tomorrow is a dynamic interactive workshop designed for boys between 8 – 12. Discussions, interactive games, skits, and exercises teach the boys about violence against women and about how to react as a hero when they recognize forms of violence. The workshops are led by a team of male and female facilitators and have received rave reviews from our various groups. WISE has been pleasantly surprised that some girl's groups have

attended and really took to the session, so we have adapted the program to offer it to some girl's groups this past year. We are taking bookings at this time and you can learn more on Facebook or www.wiseottawa.ca. Contact us to book a session for your group.



Women on Wheels



Girls and women are not often taught anything about vehicle maintenance. An automobile is one of the most major purchases we might make in our lives. Want to have some idea of how to maintain it and ensure its reliability so you're not stranded or let down at the side of a road sometime? Well, this workshop is for you! It's all about women learning some practical maintenance tips to prevent becoming vulnerable in a breakdown. Learn tips about security for your vehicle. and, pick up some negotiating tips on buying a new car, or negotiating a new lease? Many women who have experienced violence may have reduced confidence and may not make as good a deal as they can. Let's practice together. Let's keep rolling!

WISE conducted two workshop series this past summer with our facilitators Josh Deecker and Natasha Petten. We were thrilled with the reaction from women. They told us that they loved it and

can't wait for sessions to resume this year. Due to the pandemic, workshops may be delayed starting up this summer but we will do our best to offer a workshop as soon as we can arrange to do it safely and in accordance with the health mandates of Ottawa Public Health and the city of Ottawa.

Women On Wheels - Bicycle Repair Workshops

You might be a cyclist. So, once we are ready to get back in the swing, get the bike out of the garage and let's tune it up for the season with our partners from Velofix and Safer Roads Ottawa. You can do this for your own bike, and teach your kids good maintenance tips to keep their bicycles in working order.

As soon as it is safe to do so, workshop dates will be announced. Until then, happy wheeling!

Legal Education Workshop

One of our workshop series offered to partner organizations and women experiencing violence in Ottawa, is the Legal Education Workshop. WISE is offering the workshop to groups who wish to book. It is designed to help women know their rights when involved with the justice system.

Collaborative Initiatives

Women and Gender Equity Strategy Working Group



WISE had two members appointed to sit on this working group: the Policy & Administrative Coordinator Valerie Collicott and Communications Chair Nasreen Rajani. Ottawa established a working group of community partners and allies to provide input into the WGES objectives and strategic actions, and provide advice on available options and opportunities for the promotion of gender equity in the city.

Ambassador Working Group on the City of Ottawa Official Plan



WISE joined with a number of other organizations in Ottawa to help work on the official plan to determine what our city would look like by 2050. We know that since Ottawa has reached the million person mark in 2019, the city wants a forward-looking plan for the future, so it has invited these groups to have input on the next 50 years. Since our needs are changing as we grow, we wanted to be resilient

and adaptable. Our goal with the planning sessions was to become the most liveable mid-sized city in North America. The group was projecting the needs for housing, transportation, land use, infrastructure and many other factors in the official plan. This work is ongoing and has been impacted by COVID-19 as virtual meetings are now starting to be arranged.

Community Funding Framework Review

WISE participated in the sessions on updating and modernizing the community funding framework at the City of Ottawa. Time was spent identifying areas of priorities and gaps in the framework. Originally, this new framework was to begin in January 2021. However, COVID-19 has also impacted this plan, and the new funding framework is now scheduled to take effect in 2022.

Safety Stakeholder Working Group with OC Transpo



WISE is just one of the organizations that form this working group on safety that dialogues and interacts with OC Transpo on a number of safety issues and how they impact women. Since it began a number of years ago, the working group has been successful in pressing to have online reporting of harassment incidents on transit in Ottawa. We are particularly proud of the implementation and acceptance of the anonymous reporting status which was at first not favourably received when first proposed. In addition, this working group has pressed for informed messaging on transit to help riders know what to do if they experience, or observe something unsafe. Recently, WISE along with two other working group members, OCTEVAW and Hollaback Ottawa made a submission on the wearing of face masks on transit – underscoring that OC Transpo should make masks available to its public and help alleviate situations that arise if backlash occurs if a rider is legitimately not able to wear a mask but suffers negative feedback while trying to use transit. Check the WISE website for that submission. www.wiseottawa.ca

Consultation on the New Design for the New Public Library



As public feedback was being sought, on the design of the new public library (opl), WISE was approached and requested to review site plans and give feedback. We were happy to meet with a representative to review detailed plans of the site and provide comments and constructive suggestions for changes to enhance safety for women and vulnerable persons who would be using the space. We were able to provide suggestions for accessibility issues, and changes with respect to womens' safety for points of access to certain areas of the design which could impact on safety.

Consultations with HR Company RE: City Hall Hiring for Political Staff

Complaints of sexual harassment were lodged this year against a Municipal Councillor by job applicants for work on his staff and from a number former political staff. In response, WISE and other organizations wrote to the Mayor and Councillors with suggestions on ways to improve procedures at City hall. Following our intervention, the City clerk's office invited WISE to be involved in the process by which we were consulted by an external Human Resources Firm which was conducting an investigation of hiring practices. WISE staff made numerous suggestions for ways to make the process safer for women interviewing and working at the City. WISE recommended that there be a hiring framework and procedure in place by which staffers can make complaints and have them investigated; have oversight during interviews in process which would mean an additional person be present during interviews to ensure accountability and have some liaison between the political staffing process and the bureaucracy at the City. WISE is concerned that these young women, and most of them are young women, have a safe and respectful work place that is free of sexual harassment.

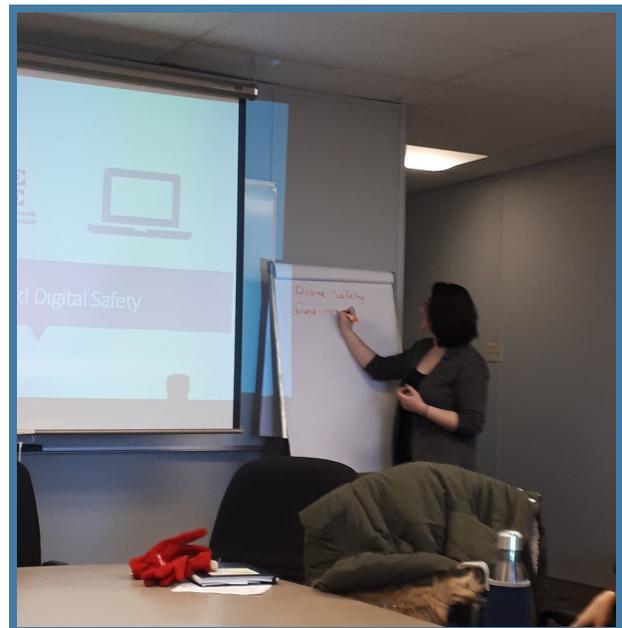
WISE at Telfer School of Management

WISE staff were invited to be keynote speakers at a session for Telfer School of Management participants in the A Program at a workshop lab. WISE shared challenges and barriers for local level nonprofit organizations and ways we overcame them and two other speakers spoke at a national and international level of challenges.



Safety Workshop for International Activists with Nobel Women Initiatives

WISE was requested to design a workshop for visiting activists from a number of countries who are involved in advocacy in the area of violence against women. These women find themselves exposed to some very dangerous situations and experience severe personal threats. WISE offered two workshops to these advocates to address safety issues and to assist them in remaining safe as they do their work in various countries out in the field and online. This workshop was especially well received and appreciated. It looks as if WISE will be able to offer workshops of this nature for NWI sessions.



Interactive Media Management program at Algonquin College

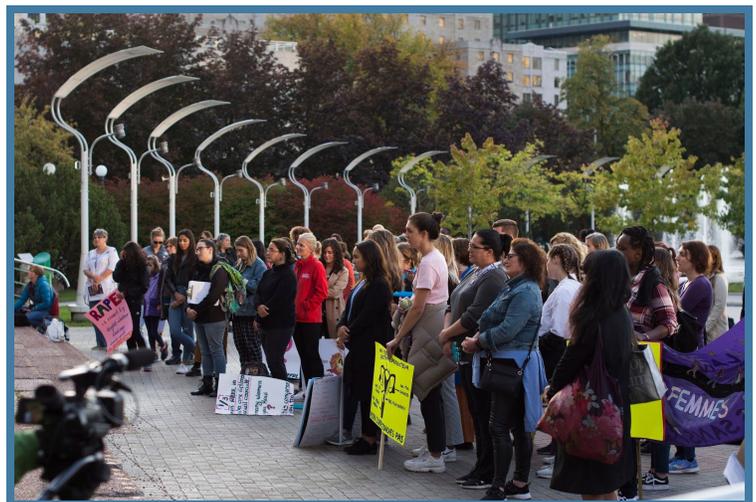
WISE was very pleased to participate this year with the Algonquin Interactive Media Management Program. We had 3 students from Algonquin College, Baldeep Kaur, Shreyas Puthran and René Torres working with us to create public relations material to highlight our Heroes for Tomorrow Program. Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped out with this highly interactive engaging program for boys.

[Check out our Facilitator team and WISE staff](#), also found on our WISE Youtube channel.



Women's Events Network:

WISE is proud to continue to be part of the public education events organized by Women's Events Network (WEN) including: the ClothesLine Project, Take Back the Night and the December 6 Vigil. Each event is designed to heighten public awareness about the issue of violence against women and how we all can work together to stop it.



The ClothesLine Project

The ClothesLine Project is carried on during the month of May (Sexual Assault Awareness Month) and is designed to bring attention to the issue of intimate partner violence. Last year, you would have found us hanging t-shirts and other items on clotheslines in Minto Park to highlight the fact that violence against women and children is a societal problem; not a private family matter!



Women's Events Network in collaboration with First United All Saints organized the special 30th anniversary of the tragic murders at the École Polytechnique in 1989 and to remember all of the women from our own communities. The first part of our event was an outdoor vigil held at Minto park where we had Indigenous groups drumming, candlelight and flowers offered in tribute to murdered women, followed by a procession to the National Arts Centre where we heard from a distinguished Indigenous panel who spoke to MMIWG2S issues, and the call to action on the over 200 recommendations out of the inquiry. WEN organized a postcard campaign for participants to send a message to the Prime Minister to reinforce this call to action.

Other events hosted by WEN this past year include the Take Back the Night Event which has been ongoing for over 40 years.

Some of the other initiatives that we have been involved with during this past year include:

- ❖ Partnership with Safer Roads Ottawa - coffee information sessions and dance workshop.
- ❖ Safety Blitz at Ottawa U with Student Foot Patrol – enhancing campus safety
- ❖ Partnership with Bronson Hub to deliver programming to isolated seniors
- ❖ Workshop for Federal employees with Treasury board on Violence Against Women.
- ❖ Ongoing Membership with Ottawa Coalition To End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- ❖ WISE is a member of the Public Engagement Committee/Advocacy collaborating with other agencies on initiatives to raise awareness on violence against women and collaborating on initiatives and activities to support VAW programming and campaigns.

WISE Programming

Community Safety Audits 2019-2020:

One of our marquis programs at WISE for over 26 years is our Community Safety Audits. We have worked with numerous groups from neighbourhoods all across the city and in the rural areas, addressing safety concerns identified as we go through the walkabout, the primary piece of the Safety Audit process.

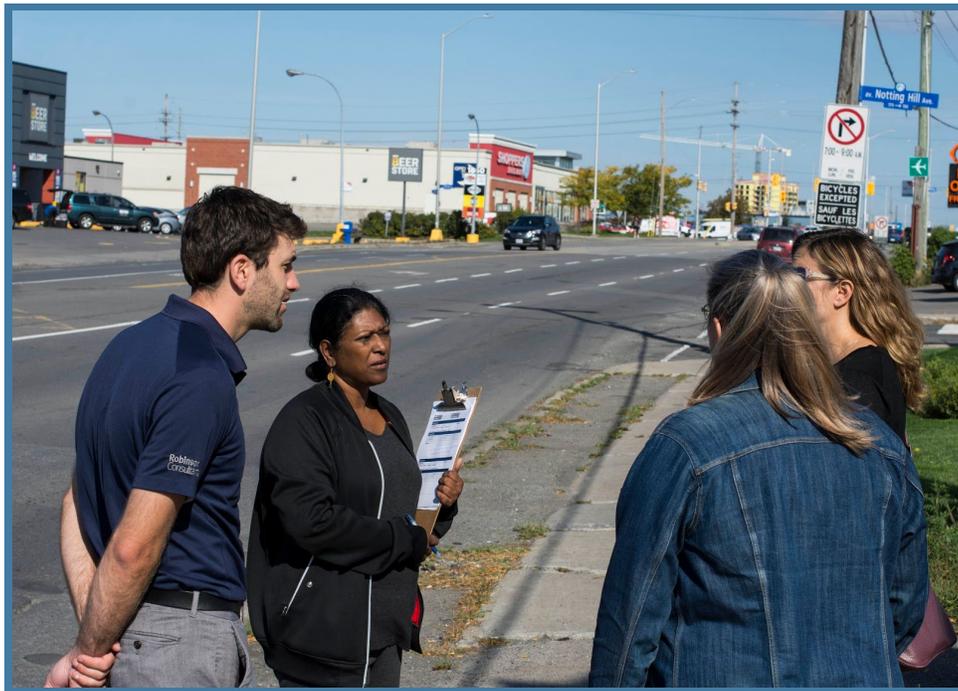
Our audits have been conducted in various environments from large neighbourhood sectors, to small alleys, to apartment building interiors and exteriors, to underground garages or recreational pathways. We've audited the bus stops on local streets and major stations along the transit way and the O-Train stations. Find the results from these audits in a series of reports on women's safety at transit stations. Call our office to secure copies.

If you're wondering where we do these Safety Audits and how you go about getting one done, it's pretty easy! Anywhere someone may be feeling unsafe in a public area is fair game. Simply

call us and we'll work with you and any other residents or stakeholders to make the space feel safer to use. The following are some of the audits that WISE worked on over the past year:

Community Safety Audit Summaries – 2019

Safety Audit for the Bank Street Revitalization Project:



The City of Ottawa and Robinson Consultants developed a revitalization plan for Ottawa's Bank St. Riverside – Ledbury segment of Ottawa South. Robinson Consultants Inc. enlisted the services of WISE to conduct a community safety audit of the proposed revitalization site.

The main results of the audit revealed several sidewalks obstructed by hydro poles, stop signs, and bus stops placed in the centre of the sidewalk. These were noted as pedestrian safety and accessibility impediments. The new project plan would see these obstacles removed to allow safe widened access for pedestrians.

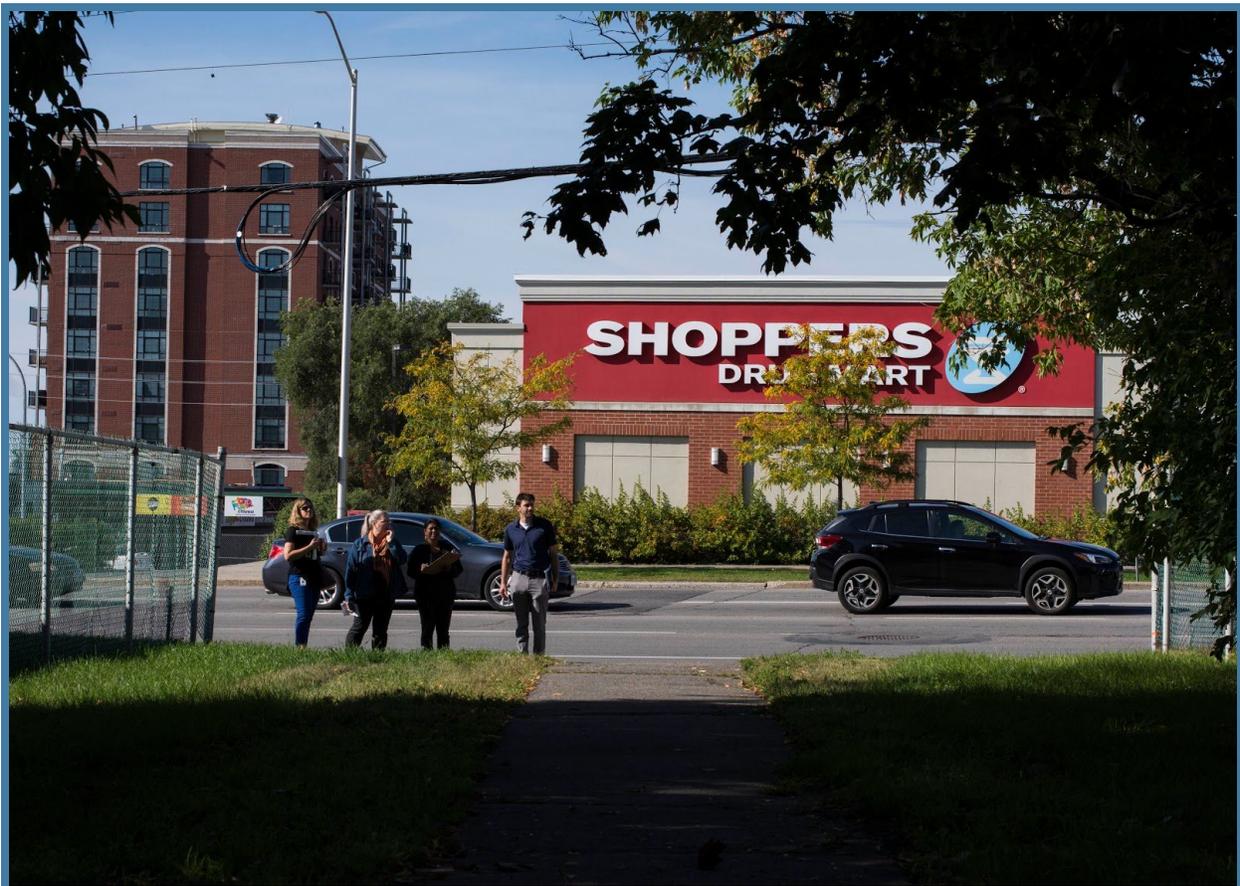
Similarly, vacant lot was observed along the south side of Bank Street. Residents report witnessing illicit activities at this location. The new design will ensure that this lot will be

secured from random access with fencing, trimming of foliage, and new lighting to enhance visibility and safety.

Several points along the audit site were marked by overgrown foliage and bushes that prevent clear sightlines. These points will be slated for trimming and clearing to allow clearer sightlines for pedestrians and cyclists.

Roads and intersections will be widened to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, buses and vehicles. Clear buffer zones will be created to ensure that pedestrians do not clash with cyclists while moving forward to board buses.

Sidewalks will also be widened to allow wheelchair users and pedestrians to use the sidewalk at the same time.



Bayview O Train Station

The construction site of the Bayview O Train Station has been a requested audit site as of 2018, during which time several women in the community have been expressing concerns over safety accessing the station.

As a result of the audit, WISE proposed several recommendations. The perimeters of the terminal, and pathways to the station, require fencing to prevent access to large unmaintained fields which can pose as potential assault sites. Lighting is recommended to be installed along all points of the pathway and station so that it is equidistant and provides consistent lighting throughout the pathways as people travel to and from the station. Emergency call boxes require clear labelling using bold, large, high contrast lettering to be visible to pedestrians from a 5 metre distance so that transit users can gauge where help is available along their route.

These recommendations have been brought to the attention of OC Transpo.

Carlington Community Safety Audit:

The safety committee of the Carlington Community Association has been working with WISE over the past two years to complete safety audits in neighbourhoods to prevent crime. The audits are done in partnership with residents, community association members, the Carlington Community Resource Centre, the city councillor, and Ottawa Police Services.

Residents expressed concern that many areas of the neighbourhood are dark and shadowed due to overgrown trees and bushes that cover light fixtures and street lighting along streets. It is recommended that city landscaping measures be scheduled regularly to ensure that visibility and lighting standards in neighbourhoods remain efficient and consistent.

Several sidewalks in the community were observed to be damaged, cracked and uneven. Pedestrians, particularly those using wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers report difficulty and danger when walking in the neighbourhood. The sidewalks pose fall hazards particularly at night. It is recommended that sidewalks be repaired and graded to ensure safe walking conditions.

In addition, community parks require improved lighting along all peripheries, and entrance and exit points, to prevent loitering, vandalism, and crime, as well as provide park users with more clear visibility.

These recommendations are being reviewed for implementation by the city councilor and the community association.

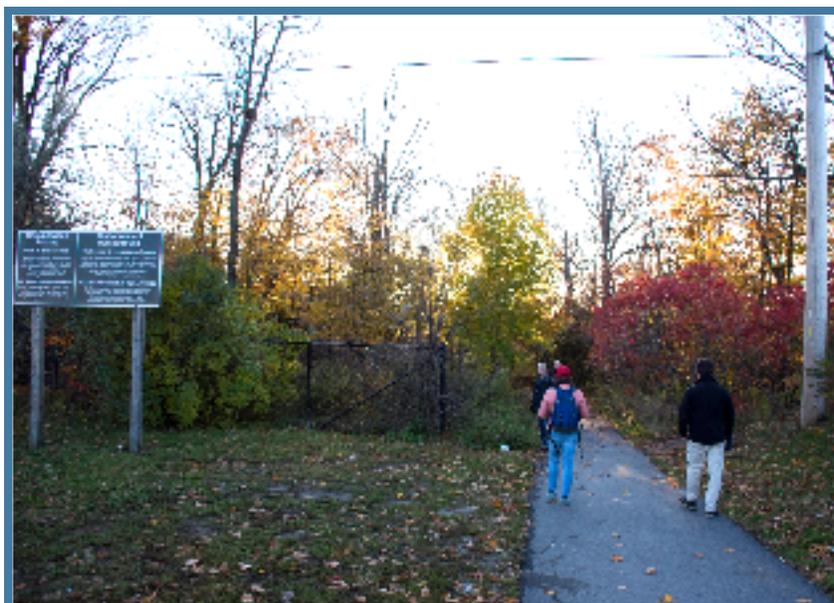
The future impact to the neighbourhood in light of the arrival of LRT

Some of the pertinent results of this audit were the following:

It was observed that there is an unsafe crossing for pedestrians wishing to cross Jeanne d'Arc Blvd. at Bilberry Crescent. It was recognized that as more people move into the nearby Champlain site, there will be increased crossing at this junction from the local bus stop to Bilberry Crescent and vice versa. It is recommended that this site will likely need a pedestrian crosswalk in the coming future to ensure the safety of pedestrians and transit users.

Several well utilised pathways were present along sectors of the neighbourhood audited. However, these pathways are not maintained during summer and winter months. They were observed to be unlit with overgrown foliage. During winter months, the paths are not cleared of snow and ice, creating unsafe walking conditions. In addition, the existing paths are narrow, limiting individuals from maintaining a safe distance from others. It is recommended that the city re-examine the existing paths, install pedestrian lighting, provide regular maintenance, and pave and widen the pathways.

Concern was also raised over a main crosswalk for pedestrians. While the crosswalk is painted, there is currently no stop sign. The removal of the stop sign is facilitating the speeding movement of buses, and cars which drive straight through to access the adjacent parking lot. A yield to pedestrians, or stop sign, is recommended at this juncture, as drivers who are coming up an incline to this location, cannot see the crosswalk marking when they enter the area, and may not be able to slow down in time for pedestrians. These recommendations are being reviewed and slated for implementation by the community working group.



Safety Audit at Elizabeth Fry Society – JF Norwood Residence:

The Elizabeth Fry Society operates JF Norwood House, are residence for women located in the Bronson Centre.

The staff and residents of the residence expressed concerns around the safety of the building and requested a community safety audit to explore measures for improving security and safety.

Some of the areas that were discussed involved the following:

Lighting: Staff and residents report a lack of visibility when entering the rear parking lot of the building. The parking lot is narrow and long and the lighting is very tightly angled at the building. The few light standards that are currently in place shed little light into the area where staff and residents enter or exit the lot. Staff and residents have reported theft, break and enters, vandalism, and general feelings of fear when accessing this lot. There are no other options for entry as it is the only parking for the building. Residents also use this space frequently because it is one of the more common and convenient routes to enter the building. Recommendation for increased lighting in the parking lot at the rear of the building with a view to angling light standards to cast light onto the entrance and exit points as well as the entire length of the parking lot were made as a result of the audit.

It was also recommended that a camera be placed in the parking lot to monitor activity during early morning and late evening hours as many staff work non-traditional hours and many residents travel in and out at different times of the day.

Lighting was also a high priority concern at a back stairwell leading from Norwood House to the smoking area. WISE recommended that lighting be installed in this area to enhance visibility.

Accessibility: Elevators in the building need to be replaced, or repaired, as they do not function reliably. The elevators are also small and do not provide enough space to manoeuvre a wheelchair. Hallways leading to the elevators are narrow and make accessibility difficult. There are no lights in front of the elevator currently to signal its presence from a distance. Railing should be placed along the hallways leading to the elevator to assist with access.

These recommendations are being reviewed by the Elizabeth Fry Society management and Bronson Centre.

Safety Audit at Ottawa Fringe Festival

WISE in partnership with Project Soundcheck was asked to perform a safety audit of the Ottawa Arts Court to improve the safety of festival goers. This project is part of a larger initiative to raise awareness, take responsibility, and protect festival participants from sexual assaults and harassment which we know to be high in numbers at festival gatherings.

The audit resulted in several positive recommendations. It was determined that installation of wayfinding maps throughout premises at all entry and exit points would help to orient users to important areas of refuge and information and help orient them through an otherwise convoluted space.

The design of bathrooms was also an area of particular concern. Installation signage denoting gender neutral and gender specific bathrooms was recommended as well as the raising of stall doors to prevent people from being hidden in bathroom stalls.

Trimming of overgrown bushes and foliage in several outside courtyard areas was recommended. These areas are dark and can present as assault sites, particularly at night. One of the most relevant recommendation from this audit was to implement training for all personnel in sexual assault response protocols and to develop a sexual assault support booth. This support booth should be advertised in bathrooms and other key areas on the premises. Finally it was recommended that festival management staff work in alliance with adjacent businesses to install cameras that monitor all areas surrounding the building and festival premises so that instances where perpetrators attempt to lure victims to a remote location may be tracked.

The festival management team is working on implementing these recommendations.

Lotus House Safety Audit

Lotus House is a shelter that provides housing to women awaiting trial and or, released on bail and is owned and operated by the Elizabeth Fry Society.

Lotus House is a newly acquired facility and is located in a residential split level home. Due the design limitations, a safety audit was requested to enhance the safety of both staff and residents.

Based on the audit results, it was discovered that parts of the shelter grounds are hidden from view, and trespassers are found loitering in these hidden areas. Additional cameras in these blind spots to help monitor and deter dangerous behaviour and was recommended.

In addition, staff are often working alone in a small office space where they can easily be entrapped. WISE recommends that each shift should be staffed by a minimum of 2 people with an additional third staff member on call, if a more open space cannot be designed.

Finally, it was observed that the executive director’s office is located in a far recessed area of the basement. Once again, this presents as an isolated entrapment site. WISE recommended that all offices be located at ground level and in proximity to exit points.

The staff will be working together with the Elizabeth Fry Society to look at implementing these recommendations.

Safety audit for Youville Client Residence:

WISE works in partnership with the Youville Centre to provide safety audits on individual living accommodations for young mothers who are rebuilding their lives.

Many of the clients are starting over with infants and toddlers in subsidised living arrangements that are often in poor repair. The risk of being tracked and found by ex partners is also an ever present reality. Therefore, working together to enhance the safety of the homes with support and funding from Youville Centre, can help ensure the safety of these young women and promote independence.

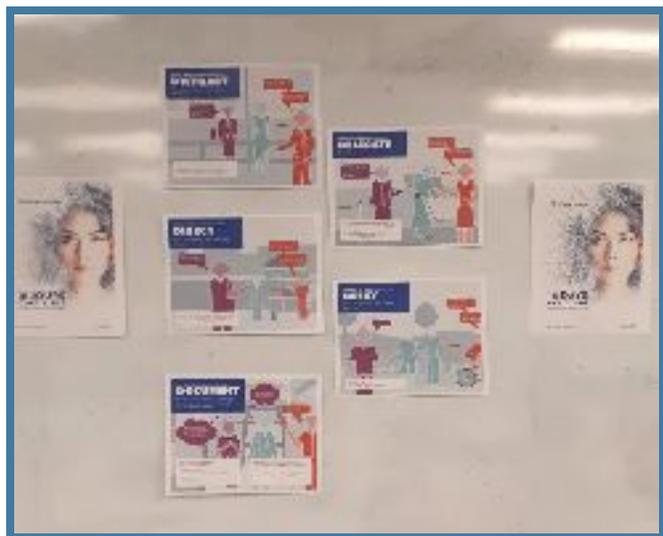
Through these audits, it is often recommended that a double lock be placed on front doors as the present locks are often loose and do not function properly.

Windows in the bedroom often require new lock fixtures. In addition, a peephole on front doors is recommended to provide a view of anyone approaching the home. If possible, a security system is recommended to alert police in the event of a break in.

— If your neighbourhood requires a Safety Audit, contact the WISE office —

Personal Safety Workshops

WISE offers an interactive workshop on personal safety that is tailored to a variety of specific groups accessing our service. In the workshop you will learn about Safety Awareness, Assertiveness, Strategies about safety at home, on the street and while using public transit. We offer workshops to groups of all ages from youth to seniors.

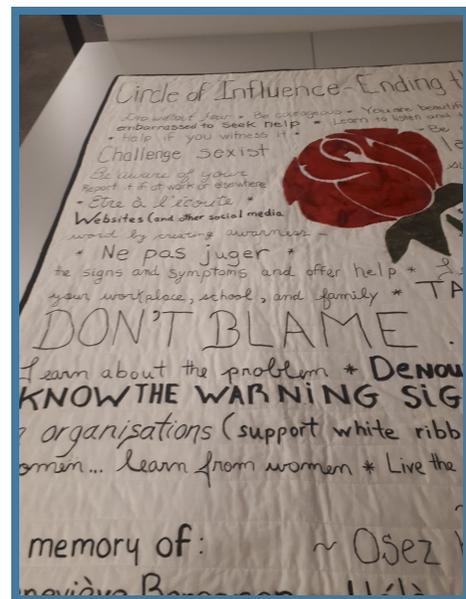


WISE has conducted the following list of Personal Safety and specialized workshops aimed at giving women confidence and empowerment during the past year:

- Building Women Up – Home Renovation workshop - Baseline
- Building Women Up – Home Renovation workshop - Gloucester
- Heroes for Tomorrow - Caldwell Community House
- Heroes for Tomorrow Walkley Community House
- Heroes for Tomorrow Banff Community House
- Women on Wheels – Series 1
- Women on Wheels – Series 2
- Personal Safety Workshop – Immigrant Women Services Ottawa
- Personal Safety Youth workshop - Youth Services Bureau
- Personal Safety Workshop – Interval House Ottawa
- Personal Safety Workshop – Youville Centre
- Personal Safety Workshop – 800 St. Laurent
- Personal Safety Workshop –Notre Dame School
- Personal Safety Workshop –Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) 160 charlotte
- Personal Safety Workshop –1455 Clementine
- Women on Wheels - Bike Repair Workshop– Series 3
- 2 Legal Education workshops: - Emily Murphy – Non-Profit Housing
- Legal Education workshop- Southeast Ottawa Community Resource Centre (SEOCHC)

To book a Personal Safety Workshop or any of our specialized workshops, check out our Facebook for announcements, call us (613) 230-6700 or check our website: www.wiseottawa.ca.

Our workshops are comprehensive and adaptable in delivery. We would be pleased to work with you and your group.



WISE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications Committee

Mandate:

To raise awareness of WISE with community and partners; work on communication tools i.e. WISE Brochure, logo, foundation documents, and website and social media platforms; and establish effective connections with community and Institutional partners such as Ottawa Police.

During this past year, the Communications Committee continues to work hard to promote WISE programs and safety for all in Ottawa.

We established a blog on our website where every few months, a board member shares a story or tips about improving safety and ending VAW. So far, we have four blog posts spanning topics from immigrant women facing intimate partner violence to campus safety.

WISE has established a new Instagram account where we continue to actively promote our programs and connect with diverse networks and clients in Ottawa.

WISE is focusing on giving all of our resources a brand new look, so make sure to stay tuned for some updated content on our website this upcoming year.

- Nasreen Rajani, *Committee Chair*

Program Development Committee

Mandate:

The Program Committee provides program support and advice to WISE by:

- Recommending innovative and sustainable programs to the Board that are in line with the strategic direction of WISE;
- Aiming to increase the public profile of WISE by strengthening and creating sustainable partnerships;
- Developing monitoring and performance indicators for programs to ensure efficient and effective program delivery; and
- Supporting the Communications Committee with regard to program outreach and advocacy.

This year WISE engaged in several new partnerships and projects to improve safety for women and communities across Ottawa.

Within the scope of our community safety audit work, WISE worked with the city of Ottawa, engineering and consulting firms, and public advisory committees on the redesign of spaces within neighbourhoods in Ottawa to ensure that women's perspectives are included in plans that impact walkability, personal safety, traffic control, lighting, sightlines, landscaping, and accessibility. Through our work with community residents and stakeholders, WISE has been able to advocate for increased pedestrian lighting along multi-use paths, improved traffic calming measures, landscaping that plans for a reduced maximum height for trees and shrubbery, and accessibility measures to ensure the safety of people using mobility aids, thereby increasing the safety of women, seniors, pedestrians, transit users, and people with different abilities in our communities.

In light of an increase in revitalization plans for several neighbourhoods in the city over the past two years, WISE is eager to continue working with planners and stakeholders to ensure that newly designed communities are safe for women and all vulnerable members of our communities.

WISE also continued to work with OCTEVAW and the Sexual Assault Network as part of our partnership in the Project Soundcheck initiative to help make festival spaces assault free. This year, the initiative focused on the Ottawa Fringe Festival where we worked with a receptive and proactive festival management team. Through the community safety audit process, several recommendations for improving safety and helping to prevent gender based violence at this festival venue were slated for implementation.

WISE also provided personal safety workshops throughout this past year. Of note, WISE worked with a new organization -The Nobel Women's Initiative – an international advocacy organisation based in Ottawa created in 2006 by six female winners of the Nobel Peace Prize. The mandate of this organization is to support women's groups around the world in campaigning for justice, peace and equality. WISE worked with women advocates from countries around the world on personal and online safety while in the line of advocacy work. We also continued to work with our long standing partners and sister organizations such as Immigrant Women's Services of Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing, Interval House, Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, Carlington Community Resource Centre, and more, in the fight to prevent and end violence against women in the city of Ottawa.

It was "Lights, Camera, Action" for the Heroes for Tomorrow team who participated in a promotional video campaign with Algonquin College's Multimedia Program. It was a chance for our team of volunteers to showcase their acting skills through educational theatre skits related to gender based violence. WISE will be using the video skits to expand our program

farther into the community. Heroes for Tomorrow worked with three new communities this year to deliver workshops to young boys, and worked to engage them in discussions on the prevention of gender based violence.

We enthusiastically look forward to the future, increasing our work with new partners in the community, continuing our involvement in the design and safety of Line 2 of the LRT, and empowering women survivors in our communities.

- Kristy-Lu Desrosiers, *Committee Chair*

Finance and Fundraising Committee



WISE is proud to report that we held our 2nd annual fundraiser “PICK-A-PRIZE RAFFLE” in October of 2019 and raised over \$1000.00. the event was hosted at Spin Kitchen and Bar in downtown Ottawa, and was a very successful event. WISE was fortunate to receive over \$2300.00 in-kind donations from local businesses to support our fundraiser. While enjoying refreshments and networking among the approximately 50 guests, we also took the opportunity to share our mission and mandate with participants and share information about WISE programs and services.

WISE has continued to receive financial contributions from its Board of Directors as well as other community supporters and as a designated recipient for the United Way Campaign. Local unions, professional associations and individuals have generously given donations this past year to WISE to support our programs and services. Our empowering workshops have prompted community members to donate and WISE is very grateful and appreciative.



In whatever way you have supported our organization throughout the past year, we thank you.

- Katherine LaPlante, *Committee Chair*

THANK YOU TO FUNDERS

WISE is fortunate to have some core funding from the City of Ottawa. We are very pleased to work with all councillors and the Mayor to assist with anyone in the city who is feeling unsafe in public areas. We count on Councillors to spread the word that WISE is here and ready to assist. We thank our funding consultant Colleen Jones who has given us some valuable advice and is ready to answer our questions and guide us through significant proposed changes to the funding model at the City.



Other sources of funding came from:

- ❖ Supporters who came out to our fundraiser at Spin Kitchen and Bar (Pick-A-Prize Raffle)
- ❖ The Elementary Occasional Teachers Association of Ottawa-Carleton
- ❖ Proceeds from the “Support WISE” campaign at Pure Kitchen through the sale of smoothies during September
- ❖ Canada Helps Donors
- ❖ United Way Campaign

THANK YOU TO PARTNERS

WISE is fortunate to work with many partners in the community. Partners range from interested individuals, to institutions such as the Police, OC Transpo, Ottawa Housing, etc.

- ❖ Interval House Women’s Shelter
- ❖ AIDS Committee of Ottawa
- ❖ CALAC-Service for Francophone women
- ❖ Sexual Assault Network (SAN)
- ❖ The Sexual Assault Support Center (SASC)
- ❖ Eastern Ottawa Woman Abuse Program
- ❖ Harmony House - Women’s Second-Stage Shelter
- ❖ Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- ❖ Fem’aide
- ❖ Maison d’amitié shelter
- ❖ Nelson House Women’s Shelter,
- ❖ Individual women from the community
- ❖ Immigrant Women Services Ottawa (IWSO)
- ❖ Catholic Family Services Ottawa (CFSO)
- ❖ Eastern Ottawa Resource Center (EORC), Children Who Witness Violence Program
- ❖ Ottawa-Carleton Separate School Board
- ❖ Community Associations
- ❖ Minwaashin Lodge
- ❖ Wabano Community Center
- ❖ ODAWA Friendship Center
- ❖ Blair Court Community House
- ❖ Crime Prevention Ottawa

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- ❖ City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
 - ❖ Planned Parenthood Ottawa
 - ❖ The Youville Center
 - ❖ Youth Network on Safety with Youth Services Bureau (YSB)
 - ❖ CHEO YouthNet
 - ❖ City of Ottawa employees: Parks, Lighting
 - ❖ Ottawa Police
 - ❖ Hollaback Ottawa
 - ❖ Ottawa University Women's Center
 - ❖ Carleton University Women's Center
 - ❖ Ottawa Fire Department
 - ❖ Safer Roads Ottawa Program, City of Ottawa
 - ❖ City of Ottawa Mayor & Councillors
 - ❖ Southeast Ottawa Healthier Communities
 - ❖ Canadian Hearing Society
 - ❖ Manifest Change Program (OCTEVAW)
 - ❖ City of Ottawa Councillors
 - ❖ Various Community Resource and Health Centers
 - ❖ Carty House
 - ❖ Girl Guides Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
 - ❖ Algonquin College
 - ❖ Ottawa Tool Lending Library
 - ❖ Pressed Café
 - ❖ Home Depot Stores
 - ❖ CFIA
 - ❖ Avo Webworks
 - ❖ Overbrooke-Forbes Community Centre
 - ❖ Pure Kitchen
 - ❖ Because Wilno
 - ❖ Public Service Alliance of Canada
 - ❖ Emily Murphy
 - ❖ The Running Room

Thank you partners and we look forward to sustained and robust partnerships!

SAFER FOR WOMEN, SAFER FOR ALL
PLUS SECURITAIRE FOR LES FEMMES, PLUS SECURITAIRE FOR TOUS!