



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the traditional lands of Treaty 7 upon which Banff is located and honour these sacred grounds that were shared by the Siksika, Piikuni, Kainai, the Tsuut'ina peoples of the Stoney-Nakoda First Nations of Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney, as well as the Metis peoples of Region 3 of the Metis Nation of Alberta. We recognize that we have a responsibility to understand our history and the Spirit and Intent of Treaty 7 so that we can honour the past, be aware of the present, and build a future on Peace, Friendship, and Understanding for a just and caring future.

From wherever you are reading this report, we encourage you to acknowledge and honour the land you occupy.

[Click here to learn more about YWCA Banff's work towards reconciliation.](#)

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# 1: ABOUT

**Content Warning:** We decided to share personal stories from folks in our community to illustrate the significant impact of our work. Some stories discuss topics related to sexual violence, domestic violence, and suicidal thoughts, which may be distressing for some readers. Please prioritize self-care while reading this content. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or in need of support, consider taking breaks, reaching out to a trusted friend or family member, or seeking guidance from a mental health professional. Your well-being is important.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT AND CEO

We care about and are deeply embedded in this community. We understand the unique, and sometimes immediate needs of this community and adapt ourselves to meet them.

Over the past year, we have continued to push forward on our strategic pillars of: People and Culture, Resource Development, Advocacy and Leadership, and Housing and Shelter. We have reflected on our organizational growth and our adaptation to emerging community needs. Engaging in our work and communicating about it are two very different areas of focus. Through reflection and consultation with community, it became increasingly clear that we needed to devote some time and energy to challenging outdated perspectives as well as communicating and celebrating our evolution as an organization. If the people we are here to serve and other important contributors

didn't understand what we were doing, how could we expect to grow a more thriving, equitable and kind *Bow Valley community*\*?

Throughout the year we conducted multiple research initiatives with internal and external collaborators and spoke with over 100 members of the community which included clients of our services, staff, partners, donors, residents, government, and volunteers. They shared their perspectives on YWCA Banff, their vision for our organization and the Bow Valley community, as well as personal stories, some of which are included in this refreshed Organizational Impact Report. As we present this impact report, we are grateful for the opportunity to showcase some of these powerful personal narratives. They illustrate why our mission and efforts hold such profound importance to us and the community we serve.

**Bow Valley community\*:** While we are based in Banff, we serve the whole Bow Valley. This includes Lake Louise, Banff, Harvie Heights, Canmore, Dead Man's Flats, and Kananaskis.



# A LETTER FROM SALINA:

As a Director of the Board for YWCA Banff I can't claim that I have always been a vocal feminist.

I grew up in a place that prides itself on calling a spade a spade and where none of us take ourselves too seriously. I'd be in for the jokes; I could kick it with the boys. I'd laugh off the over-sexualized comments you just get as a female.

All that can be well and good—who doesn't love a laugh? As I grew older, I started to find that often the butt of many of the jokes relied on racism, sexism, and homophobia. When I no longer found it necessary to laugh to appease the comedian of the moment, I'd be accused of being a killjoy. "Can't you take a joke?". I guess I was starting to realize that maybe it's not that I couldn't, it's that I wouldn't.

But it isn't just jokes. In Australia, I almost exclusively worked in male-dominated industries. While I put myself through university, I worked in nightclubs doing promotions in tiny outfits branded with liquor labels or on the grid at the supercars and at the Formula 1 in whatever prestigious brand car we were representing. The cheeky bum grabs, the marriage proposals, the detailed sexualized comments and probing questions...it all goes with the job, right? But don't worry about what happens while on shift. Wait until you have to get your handbag and change of clothes from the venue office, where the managers can be worse than the patrons. It's what I signed up for, wasn't it?

I look back at what we put up with as young women. As a woman who has come into her own confidence I can say now, so many of the experiences I had through my pre-adolescent years and into womanhood were completely inappropriate. And I know this is the case for so, so many of us. In fact, [National Public Radio](#) reported that 81% of women have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their lifetime.

The culture I grew up in created a space for sexual harassment, completely disrespectful 'jokes', degrading actions, and **gender-based violence**\*—even from those who we thought we could trust. I didn't have the language or awareness back then to really comprehend or talk about it. It felt so difficult, and like I was making a mountain out of a molehill, because this is just the way things are. Everybody knows that.

I had volunteered for a number of non-profits back in Australia and when I moved to Canada, I wanted to contribute to the incredible community that I found here and fell in love with. It so happened that one of my best friends to this day was on the board for YWCA Banff and it was through her that I initially learnt of the work that they do. As I looked deeper into the movement, and the programs and services offered, I felt like that little girl that I was, was being heard.

For all the women, the children, the mothers—for anyone who has experienced assault, harassment, and violence—to have a place to go where you can feel safe. A place that gives language to the feelings you have, and that says out loud. "It's not your fault. You don't have to go through this alone, we're here for you". That is an incredible thing to have. This is an organization that recognizes the inherent dignity of women, that says we deserve support, have the right to specialized resources and the right to feel safe, not only at home but in the community.



- Salina McNamara, Board President



*\*Gender-based violence refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against an individual or a group based on their gender. It encompasses various forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, which are specifically targeted towards individuals because of their gender. Gender-based violence is deeply rooted in unequal power dynamics and social norms that perpetuate discrimination and oppression based on gender.*

# A LETTER FROM EBONY:

As the CEO of YWCA Banff, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact of our organization's efforts to address the pressing issue of affordable housing in our community. The headlines blaring the housing crisis since my arrival in 2020 struck a chord with me, realizing that this issue affects every individual, regardless of their sector or role.

Countless conversations with Bow Valley residents, from those precariously housed to business leaders striving to provide their employees with safe and affordable homes, reinforced the far-reaching implications of the housing shortage. Even my partner and I have experienced the instability, having moved three times in the past year.

Amidst these challenges, I consider myself incredibly fortunate to have embarked on a journey with YWCA Banff, knowing that we are actively contributing to the solution. Our project, [Dr. Priscilla Wilson's Place](#), stands as a testament to our commitment. Constructing a Net Zero building fashioned from shipping containers in a National park, during a global pandemic and in one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world, provided us with many challenges and sleepless nights.

But amidst the trials and tribulations, there is one story that resonates deeply within me—the story of Nina, a pseudonym for a woman who found her new home at Priscilla's Place. As the CEO, it is rare for me to directly interact with individuals accessing our services or residing on-site. However, due to the challenges we faced, our entire team rallied together, with everyone pitching in to expedite the move-in process. This led me to the privilege of accompanying Nina as she took her first steps into her new unit.

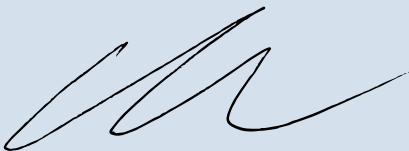
I felt a mix of nerves and anticipation as we ascended the stairs. I knew that the unit still required some finishing touches. In fact, as I showed her the bedroom closet, the doorknob unexpectedly fell off. We

meticulously documented the deficiencies, including the doorknob, promising to rectify them before her move-in date just a few days away. I awaited her reaction, bracing myself for disappointment, imagining how frustrated I would be in her shoes, considering the delays we had already faced.

Her reaction caught me off-guard. With steadfast determination, Nina took the move-in checklist and signed her name on the dotted line. She told me she didn't care about the doorknob or that one of the light bulbs needed to be replaced, but that this was the first time in her life that she had her own space, her own kitchen, she felt safe, and she was happy. Her resilience and gratitude washed away all my sleepless nights, leaving me with an unwavering sense of hope.

This is the story that needs to be shared far and wide. While our community still has a long road ahead, I remain hopeful. I firmly believe that by collaborating and pooling our collective resources, we will continue to discover innovative solutions that work for our community, ultimately resolving this pressing issue of affordable housing.

Of course, we couldn't do any of this work without the support of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, donors, supporters, and believers.



- Ebony Rempel, CEO





# MEET THE TEAM

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**SALINA MCNAMARA**  
she/her  
President



**KAREN SHELTON**  
she/her  
Treasurer



**KATE BOYD**  
she/her  
VP Operations



**ELLA SCHATZMANN**  
she/her  
VP Governance



**DANIELLE ROUSSY**  
she/her  
Secretary



**MELANIE KWONG**  
she/her  
Director



**DOMINIQUE LAGLOIRE-GALIEPEAU**  
she/her  
Director



**YVONNE MACHUK**  
she/her  
Director



**JENNY SPURR**  
she/her  
Director



**HEATHER STURM**  
she/her  
Director



**SAM WELSH**  
she/her  
Director



**JESSICA WHEATLEY**  
she/her  
Director



**EBONY REMPEL**  
she/her  
Chief Executive Officer



**STEPHEN CROTTY**  
he/him  
Capital Projects Officer



**TIM BINKS**  
he/him  
Director of Finance



**REAVE MACLEOD**  
she/her  
Director of Advocacy & Community Programs



**RAE ROBERTS**  
she/her  
Director of Residential Programs



**NEIL ATKINSON**  
he/him  
Advocacy and Community Programs Manager



**SUSANN BUCHANAN**  
she/her  
Facility Manager



**JIN KANG**  
she/her  
Accounting and Payroll Manager



**EMILY SWEENEY**  
she/they  
Marketing and Communications Manager

## SENIOR LEADERSHIP



# YWCA BANFF

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### PILLARS



**CULTURE & PEOPLE**  
Strengthen our culture to attract, retain, and develop the best people.



**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**  
Expand our resource framework to enhance the sustainability of our programs and services.



**ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP**  
Lead our community to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.



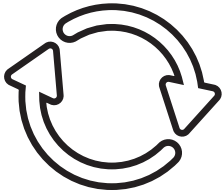
**HOUSING & SHELTER**  
Develop facilities and services to better meet the spectrum of emergency and supportive housing needs.



**WOMEN-CENTERED**  
We embrace our responsibilities as a member of a global movement committed to women's rights, gender equity, and a world without violence.



**INNOVATION**  
We push boundaries as leaders in our field. We challenge conventions and seek out research and wise practices to inspire transformative change.



**SUSTAINABILITY**  
We lead a stable organization in an ever-changing landscape. We collaboratively make decisions that strengthen the future of our organization.



**TRANSPARENCY**  
We maintain an accountable, professional presence in the Bow Valley. We ensure the integrity of our organization through open communication about our goals, practices, and outcomes.



**INCLUSIVITY**  
We strive to advance diversity and promote equity in all our decisions and interactions. We invest in learning to challenge racism and oppression.



**PARTNERSHIP**  
We promote open and active teamwork and connection with a network of community partners. We seek out and nurture collaborations that enhance our work, relationships and community.



# 2: WE EMBRACE

## EVERYONE IN THE BOW VALLEY

While YWCA Banff is a women-centred organization, we offer support to people of all genders who are comfortable in spaces that centre the experiences of women. We acknowledge the limitations of services available in the Bow Valley and recognize the importance that everyone, regardless of their gender, has access to the resources they need to both survive and thrive.

We embrace inclusion, diversity, equity, and anti-oppressive work as integral aspects of our mission. Last year, YWCA Banff surveyed our staff team and amended our wellness time and benefits offerings to ensure that all staff could access these essential resources. As a Silver Champion of the 2022 [Bow Valley Workplace Inclusion Charter](#), YWCA Banff strengthened our inclusive hiring practices, workplace accommodations, workplace language inclusion, and more.

YWCA Banff strives to promote diversity and inclusion in its events by ensuring a wide range of attendees, speakers, artists, and performers. Change Makers is a special event that celebrates the remarkable women in the community who are leaders, innovators, and catalysts for positive change. The event

features the Women of Distinction Awards, which honour local women who have exhibited outstanding accomplishments in their respective fields through their own determination, skills, and dedication.

The Women of Distinction Awards presented at Change Makers not only acknowledge individual accomplishments but also inspire others and serve as a platform to uplift and celebrate the contributions of women in the community. In preparation for the 2022 Change Makers event, YWCA Banff received an impressive 18 nominations, recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Bow Valley women from various walks of life.

YWCA Banff's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppression (IDEA) group evaluates organizational practices from an equity lens. Over the past year, our Board of Directors and staff team took a Cross-Cultural Learning Session and an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training. Staff shared resources for and discussed the importance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Within the Board, our Truth and Reconciliation Learning Group takes the lead in organizing activities and learning

opportunities that guide us on an intentional journey towards comprehending the truth.

We know that this is just the start. It has been four years since the National inquiry into [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) released the 231 calls for justice and eight years since the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) released the 94 calls to action. Acknowledging Canada's colonial history, YWCA Banff is committed to transparency and in the next fiscal year, will review the applicable calls to action and calls to justice for our organization, evaluate where we are, and determine what steps are needed to ensure they are met. Our learning journey is ongoing, and we know this must include consistent commitment to the work of healing and reconciliation, each in our own way and where possible, together, in our organization and community. We are grateful to participate in initiatives like the [Bow Valley Anti-Racism Community of Practice](#) and collaborate with other organizations working towards a thriving, equitable future for all.





# 3: WE EMPOWER

## THROUGH COUNSELING AND EDUCATION

*The team knows me and cares enough to connect in the ways that get me to respond, even in my darkest times, so that I never get lost. They're serious about caring for you and it's more than just words.*

”

Stories like these warm our hearts and reassure us that we are making a difference in the lives of the folks that we serve. Anecdotes, however, aren't enough when it comes to understanding who we are and aren't serving as well as how to increase inclusivity and access to our programs. In spring 2022 we undertook a project that is still in progress today—the implementation of an evaluation framework including the development of a new database. This has helped us better understand who we serve and the experiences of people accessing our services. It is important to us that we understand the unique experiences of those we serve so that we can continuously learn, understand, and do better. Not only do we have a far better handle on how many people we are serving through all our programs and services, but we have also improved our tools for communication and implemented a system that is intuitive, reducing the amount of time staff spend on data collection—a win all around! In phase two of this project, we will be able to report back on the outcomes our clients are achieving and the impact YWCA Banff is having in the community.

Evaluation and data are easy to de-prioritize, especially post pandemic when the demand for services is higher than ever, but we have stayed the course and are excited to share the impact we are making across all our programs and services in our next impact report.



# CRISIS LINE

672  
CALLS

**127% increase** in calls over three  
years. 2021-22 fiscal year: 335 calls;  
2020-21 fiscal year: 296 calls

269  
CALLERS

identified domestic violence, sexual violence,  
or both as the primary presenting concern

279  
CALLERS &  
WALK-INS

identified homelessness as  
their primary concern



# HOUSING & COUNSELING

## EMERGENCY SHELTER .....

**113 people** stayed at the Emergency Shelter for a total of **1,464 bed nights**.

- 65 people identified as experiencing precarious housing/homelessness (Project Home)
- 48 people identified as experiencing domestic or sexual violence

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING .....

**12 people** accessed transitional housing for a total of **1,239 bed nights**.

- 8 people identified as experiencing precarious housing/homelessness (Project Home)
- 4 people identified as experiencing domestic or sexual violence



## ..... AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**221 people** accessed affordable housing.

## ..... SUPPORTIVE COUNSELING

**40 people** accessed supportive counseling (sexual and domestic violence support, housing support, other).

**TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED THROUGH HOUSING & COUNSELING: 1,058**



# GRACE'S STORY

***They provided me with a safe shelter, offering unwavering support that played a crucial role in rebuilding my life.***

”

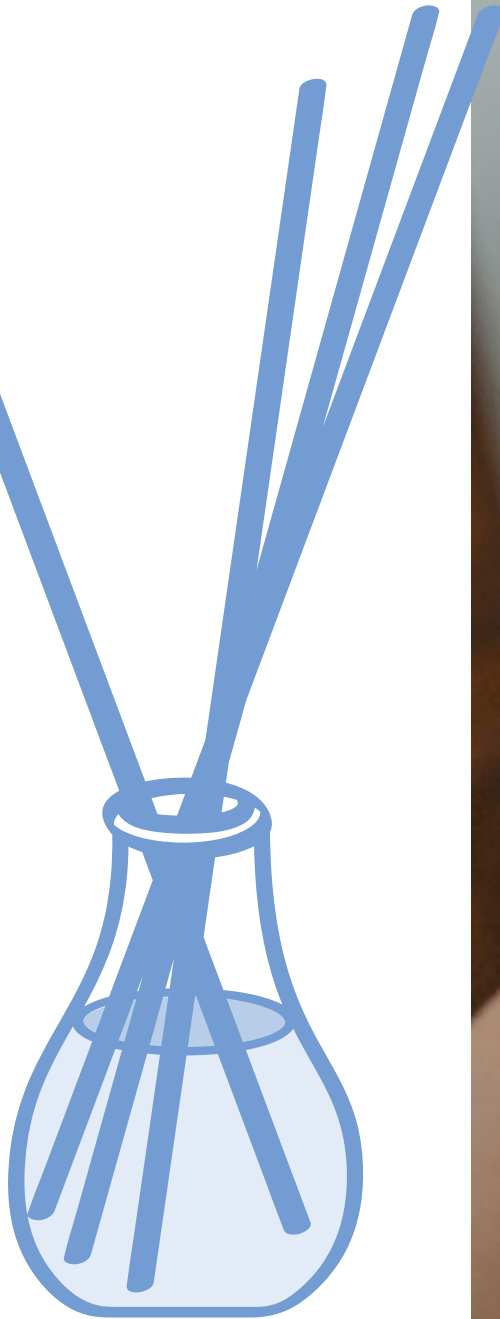
I pursued my passion as a massage therapist and holistic healer, where the power of touch was central to my profession. However, life took a challenging turn when I found myself trapped in an abusive relationship, causing me to lose everything I had worked so hard to achieve.

Finding stability and a safe haven became my priority, but I yearned to contribute to the community and follow my true calling. Thankfully, the Y became my guiding light. They provided me with a safe shelter, offering unwavering support that played a crucial role in rebuilding my life. Because of their support I was able to continue pursuing my passion for massage therapy and holistic healing.

Through the Y's influence and my own commitment, I honed my ability to provide not only physical relief but also emotional support and solace to my clients. The experience I gained through the shelter's programs enriched my understanding of the human spirit, fostering a deeper connection with those I served.

As my journey continues, I feel grateful every day for the chance to make a meaningful

difference. I am now thriving in my chosen path, and I've remained dedicated to helping others heal and find balance in their lives. Through the art of touch and my genuine care, I have earned a special place in the hearts of those I served, becoming a beacon of positivity and hope in their lives.



# POWER OF BEING A GIRL - TEEN

## KEY LEARNINGS IDENTIFIED BY ATTENDEES:

"To begin saying positive affirmations to myself and to accept my body."

"How to deal with different conflicts in a more mature communicative way."

"How to stand up for myself and others."

In the past our Power of Being a Girl conferences were hands down our most popular educational programming.

As notions around gender, and especially the **gender binary**\*, started to evolve the programming team got curious about the validity of gender specific programming and decided to ask the community what they thought through a survey. The responses indicated that it was important and beneficial to offer both gender specific and gender inclusive programming. With this in mind, we hosted our first Power of Being a Girl - Teen conference in October 2022.

This event was open to all **cis**\* and **trans**\* girls and **non-binary**\* people in grades 9-12 who are comfortable in a space that centers the experiences of girls. The day was a huge success and included a keynote address from Councilor Kaylee Ram and various sessions with guest speakers that encouraged leadership, empowerment, empathy, and healthy relationships with self and others.

*\*Cis: short for cisgender (pronounced sis-gender, or just sis), is a term that means whatever gender you are now is the same as the sex you were assigned at birth.*

*\*Trans: an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.*

*\*Non-Binary: used to describe people who feel their gender cannot be defined within the margins of gender binary. Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond simply identifying as either a man or woman.*

*\*Gender Binary: describes the concept that gender is categorized into only two distinct forms (i.e. man/woman). Many gender-expansive identities exist either between or outside of this binary, such as genderfluid, genderqueer, non-binary, or agender.*





# NANCY'S STORY



“

*I was looking  
for tools to  
help me raise  
an empathetic  
and considerate  
young man.*

I was looking for tools to help me raise an empathetic and considerate young man. In our constantly changing society, it's more important than ever.

Fortunately, in Banff, I wasn't alone. YWCA Banff has long recognized that supporting women in our community cannot be done with the exclusion of men. Their workshops, booklets and support provide boys with the tools, understanding and broader perspective they need to become better men.

For me, YWCA Banff has never been just for women. It is a trusted and powerful ally in building confidence to parent through challenging times while empowering my son and other young men to become allies for women in our community.

- Nancy DaDalt (she/her)



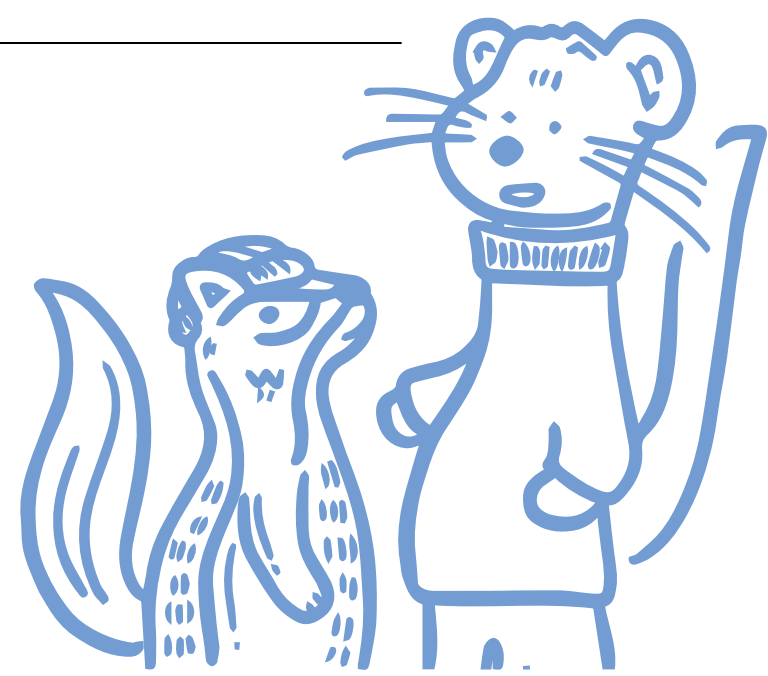
# 4: WE PREVENT

**THROUGH WIDESPREAD  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT &  
CANDID DIALOGUE**





# HARMONY PROJECT



This year saw a return to many in-person events, meetings, and training sessions. The [Harmony Project](#) team was excited to jump back in! May is Sexual Violence Awareness Month (SVAM) and the theme for 2022 was ‘Consent Through the Ages’, focusing on things that community members of all ages can do every day to ensure a safe and respectful environment. The theme was embedded within our community and resonated with many folks, deepening the community’s understanding of consent. Due to its success, the Harmony Project Committee decided to build on it for 2023 with additional focus on the workplace and being an Everyday *Upstander*\*.



The Harmony Project worked with local stakeholders including Bryan at Bow Media to produce an [impactful video](#) which is currently being screened prior to all movies at our two local theaters, making it the highest viewed and shared video that the Harmony Project has produced to date. This was a monumental year for new educational content development, including our Consent is Like Fries, How to Be an Upstander, and Pyramid of Violence posters. These assets allow the Harmony Project to reach more community members and share our messages in new ways.

Timing and community readiness is key when it comes to violence prevention and this work corresponded with the engagement of new people, including many hospitality businesses in town, wanting to positively impact community safety. YWCA Banff is excited by this momentum and the role of the Harmony Project in engaging workplaces in meaningful change in the years to come.



*\*Upstander: someone who recognizes actions, attitudes, and beliefs that normalize violence and stands up or speaks out against them.*

60

*presentations & workshops*

1,370

*workshop participants*

90.8%

*of respondents reported an increase in their knowledge/awareness of sexual violence and related topics*

18

*new educational & public awareness resources developed*



# MAKAYLAH'S STORY



*A single brave act can stop someone from being sexually harassed or assaulted and will make it known that it is not tolerated. A single brave act can save a life.*

Throughout my life I have experienced various forms of sexual violence, and I wish someone who was educated as an Upstander would have intervened in my experiences. One experience that I feel comfortable talking about was dealing with sexual harassment in a workplace.

I was in an environment surrounded by only men. I felt outnumbered on the first day, but I knew that I couldn't show this vulnerability on the outside. As sexual comments started, and then escalated each day, I felt more and more afraid for my physical safety. It was frightening to be in a situation where I knew I would be overpowered, and I felt I couldn't leave as I needed the job to pay my bills.

I tried to laugh off the comments, acting like I wasn't affected because I didn't want a bigger target on my back. But each day when I got into my car, the tough exterior would break like shattered glass, and I would cry the whole way home.

Instead of being angry at how I was being treated, I felt ashamed and trapped. I thought about how I could change myself into someone who wouldn't be harassed. I tried to hide my sexuality more, talk less, and become as invisible as I could. As the days and weeks continued, my mental health declined to the point where I started thinking about taking my own life.

Looking back, what hurt the most for me was being with many bystanders who heard the comments, and some who even laughed

along with the perpetrators. All it would have taken was one person to step in and be an Upstander, and the long-lasting effects of this experience would be less severe for me.

This is one example, and I know that I am not alone in this experience, or the feelings I experienced.

In society, we are given messages that if we experience violence, we are somehow responsible for it because of our sexuality, the way we look, or something we say. This is not right and not okay. It is perpetuating a cycle that blames the victims, and by educating yourself on being an Upstander and learning how to safely intervene, you are breaking this cycle.

It is everyone's responsibility to prevent sexual violence in our community. It is important to create a culture of Upstanders who recognize and speak up against actions, attitudes, and beliefs that normalize violence. Educating yourself on how to intervene effectively and safely is crucial in becoming an Upstander. A single brave act can stop someone from being sexually harassed or assaulted and will make it known that it is not tolerated. A single brave act can save a life.

- Makaylah Rogers (they/them)



# 5: WE ADAPT

TO SHIFTING CONDITIONS & UNIQUE  
NEEDS IN THE BOW VALLEY

YWCA Banff is deeply committed to the creation of a thriving, equitable community. We are nimble and are forever modifying our work to ensure that everyone in the Bow Valley has a safe space. [Higher Ground](#) is part of this solution. Due to the lack of affordable housing and shelter services, expanding our efforts is necessary to meet the needs. We will always strive for innovation and sustainability, aligning with the [10-Year Vision for Tourism](#) for the destination, we see YWCA Banff's ability to support in community wellbeing for all. We continue to explore opportunities related to supporting Banff's goal around world class education and opportunities within tourism and hospitality as well as the development of preventative models that support a safe and inclusive community.





# CATHY'S STORY



The Bow Valley community is not unique in its reluctance to speak openly about difficult issues. We have either ignored or addressed them gently.

YWCA Banff tackles big societal issues straight on. They are unapologetic in stating the problem and using the specific language to describe it; words that make most of us embarrassed and find hard to say. They are bold and assured.

Their confidence in this space has empowered us to follow their lead in our own boardroom conversations. We're more direct in addressing important issues and are getting better at speaking with greater clarity and conviction which makes us, and our community, stronger.

- Cathy Geisler (she/her)

***YWCA Banff  
tackles big  
societal issues  
straight on.***

”



# DR. PRISCILLA WILSON'S PLACE

*Dr. Priscilla Wilson left a unique legacy in Banff as the first female doctor in town and an inspirational mentor, role model, and friend to so many people. Queen of the Rockies is a fitting title for a woman whose magnetic character and insatiable appetite for fun were a big part of why she is so loved. Priscilla possessed the distinct combination of being both compelling herself, while curious about and compassionate for all those around her.*

*\*Net Zero: a term commonly used to describe a state where the emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, are balanced or offset by removing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere.*



Dr. Priscilla Wilson's Place is a significant achievement for the YWCA Banff, reflecting our dedication to addressing the housing crisis in the Town of Banff while also prioritizing environmental sustainability. As a prominent provider of permanent and affordable housing in Banff, YWCA Banff recognized the need for more housing options, particularly for families, which had been lacking in the affordable housing market.

We were not only delighted to incorporate 33 long-term affordable units, catering to the housing crisis and improving support for families, single parents, and individuals with diverse abilities, but another significant achievement of this project lies in its ability to reduce future utility costs for our residents. We know that the single greatest uncontrollable operating cost for our housing program is the cost of utilities. The opportunity with this new build was to incorporate **Net Zero\*** design elements to alleviate the burden of increasing costs and ensure sustainability.

Climate change has gendered impacts, meaning that it affects individuals and communities differently based on their gender. Women, especially women in marginalized groups such as 2SLGBTQIA+ people, the urban poor, and those from rural communities face heightened risks associated with climate change (Boom, 2019). To foster gender equality in the face of climate change and mitigate costs, we prioritized Net Zero performance while respecting the strict design stipulations of the Town of Banff and the conditions of the original funders to use recycled shipping containers. Our organization was committed

to developing a new housing model that could be replicated across the country with a viable and sustainable standard of living for those in need of affordable housing. And we did it, even through a pandemic with escalating costs.

Tackling these innovative design ideals within the funding constraints of affordable housing required significant dedication from our engineering and design team. Achieving Net Zero required the building to incorporate onsite energy generation through a creative solar photovoltaic roof panel system. Unfortunately, Banff's long and dark winters, coupled with the Town's pitched roof with dormer style gables constricted the volume of energy production from the usual elements required. We had to look at different, more advanced design efficiencies.

The Net Zero building components increased the construction budget by about 15%, but the outcomes are undeniable. We are very proud of the project and the fact that we have delivered a carbon neutral affordable housing program within the Town of Banff, a UNESCO Heritage site and a National Park. This achievement sets a new benchmark for other organizations to strive for in terms of providing sustainable and high-quality housing. Most importantly, the more than 80 residents of Dr. Priscilla Wilson's Place now have a safe and stable place they can call home.

**Did you know?**  
Dr. Priscilla Wilson's Place uses 33.7% less energy annually than the code minimum energy performance required by the National Energy Code for Buildings 2017.

*Dr. Priscilla Wilson's Place is a significant achievement for the YWCA Banff, reflecting our dedication to addressing the housing crisis in the Town of Banff while also prioritizing environmental sustainability.*



- EFFICIENT ELECTRICAL DESIGN:**
- Solar panels on the roof produce 78,684 kWh of electricity annually.
  - LED lighting throughout.
- ROBUST BUILDING ENVELOPE DESIGN:**
- Incorporates 62 used shipping containers.
  - Impressive insulation: The building's thermal resistance exceeds traditional construction insulation.
  - Triple pane PVC windows with LOW-E Argon coatings which, during the colder-seasons, allow the sun's rays to penetrate the home, letting in heat and light, and limit the escape of heat outward.

- EFFICIENT MECHANICAL SYSTEMS INCORPORATING HEAT RECOVERY:**
- Service water heating is generated from the highly efficient variable-refrigerant-flow (VRF) system which provides heating water through a heat exchanger and in turn heats the domestic hot water.
  - Water systems use low-flow fixtures and drain water heat recovery units which boosts the temperature of the domestic hot water.
  - Heating and cooling systems provided throughout the building by a VRF system with heat recovery capabilities.
  - The building ventilation system was outfitted with an alternating mass-exchanger recovery unit that reaches 87% efficacy in energy recapture.

- OTHER FEATURES:**
- Of the 33 units, 5 adhere to the National Accessibility Standard which contains recommendations for accessible home design. It aims to ensure that individuals with a range of physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities who reside within a home have access to the essentials for daily life.
  - Incorporated natural lighting, materials, and landscape features as well as ensured acoustical comfort to increase connection to nature and create a healthier and happier environment for residence in accordance with Biophilic Well Standards.





# NEIL'S STORY



*I am proud to be a part of an organization that is able to adapt quickly to the needs of the community.*

In the latter half of 2018 I was winding down an 18-month rock climbing trip. As much as I love climbing, I knew I wanted to do something with a bigger purpose. I was eager to get on a path and settle into a place. The Bow Valley became my home because it had meaningful employment opportunities and top-quality climbing areas.

I applied for a job at YWCA Banff because I saw it as an organization that would allow me to contribute to the world in a way that I see fit. Initially, I submitted an application for a Guest Services Supervisor role. Prior to the interview, I received an email advising me of the experience that they were looking for in candidates. I responded frankly that I lacked much of the specific experience required, expecting them to cancel the interview. Ultimately, we decided to move forward with the interview, opening up a dialogue about my core values.

To my surprise, I was offered a higher-level position that they felt was more suited to my skillset. Since then, I've been committed to the organization, knowing that they were (and are) willing to invest in me. As the Manager of Advocacy and

Outreach, I'm well-connected to many community members. I'm grateful to sit at many different tables; I get to share a voice on the intersection of many major issues in our community including hospitality, housing, and so on.

I am proud to be a part of an organization that is able to adapt quickly to the needs of the community. When the pandemic started, our organization immediately lost our biggest source of revenue—the hotel. Instead of staying stagnant and using up our residual revenues to sustain our operating expenses, we took a different stance.

We knew we needed to shift, even if we initially didn't have any external funding for it. We used our hotel rooms to start an isolation program, working with other hotels to cook and collect food for people in the program. As a result, YWCA Banff hosted 121 community members who stayed a total of 1,087 combined nights. In that time, we also served 5,391 meals to people in isolation and residents in our buildings.

During this time, while most other organizations and businesses ended up

laying off many workers, YWCA Banff tried something different. All of our staff dropped down to 4-day work week, allowing us to keep as many employees as possible. These actions made it clear to me that YWCA Banff is an organization that lives by its values and acts in the best interest of its staff members.

While the Bow Valley was initially a place where I thought I could find work while enjoying one of the best backyards in the world, I never imagined finding a path that connects me to an organization that I so closely align with. That connection and my task diversity makes it hugely exciting to come into work every day.

- Neil Atkinson (he/him)





# 6: DONORS & FUNDERS



Thank you to all the donors and funders who make YWCA Banff’s work possible.

Whether it is through supporting our annual fundraising campaigns, purchasing raffle, auction, or event tickets, or through a monthly donation, your donation supports YWCA Banff’s mission to shape a safe and inclusive Bow Valley that empowers women and their community for a better future.

We also want to thank all our anonymous donors – your support is instrumental!

DONORS & FUNDERS (\$100+)

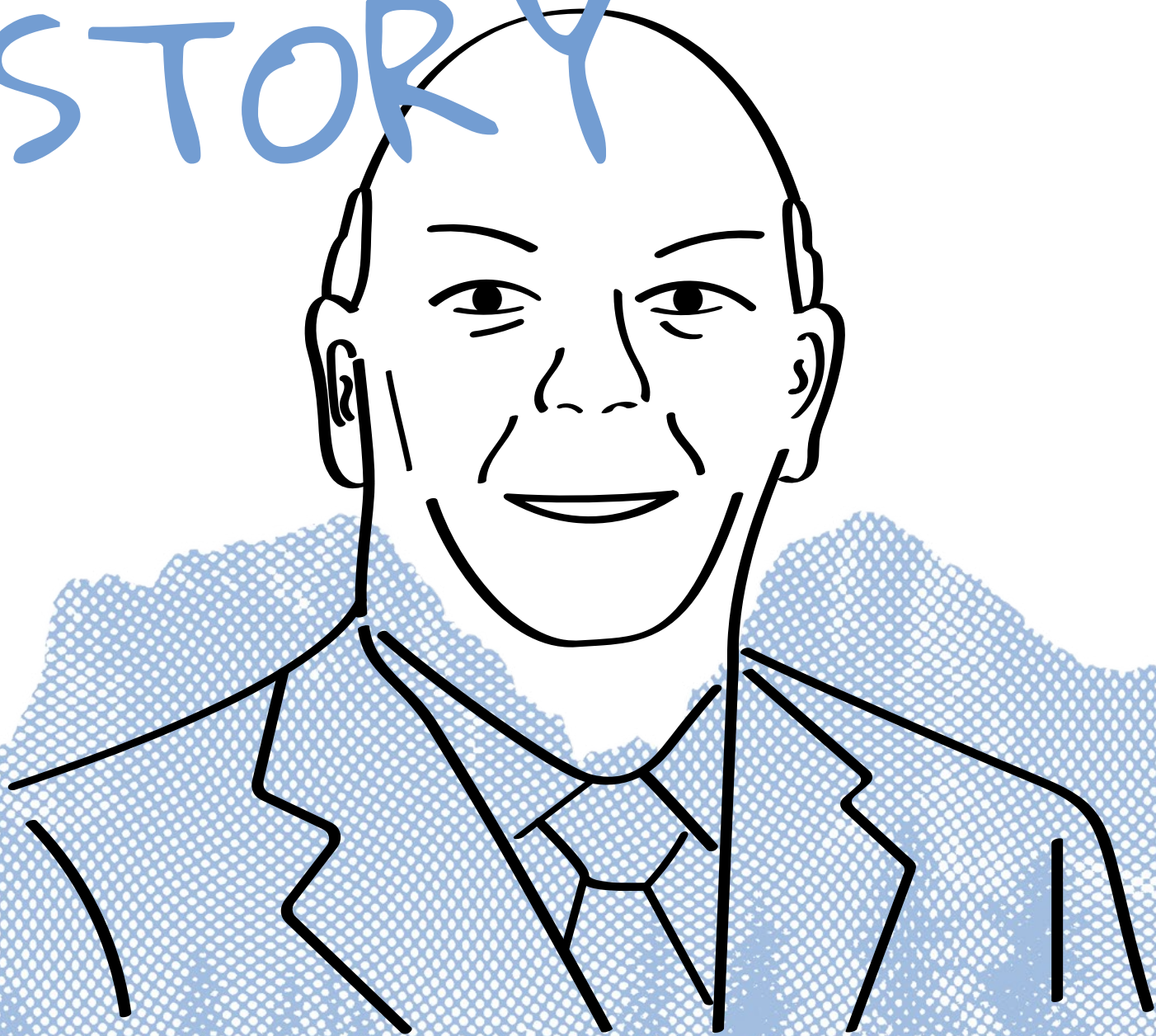
Dr. Janet Alteveer  
Alberta Health Services  
Steven Amping  
Jessie Ashton  
ATB Financial  
Jim Baker  
Banff Adventures Unlimited  
Banff Ave. Brewing Co.  
Banff Canmore Community Foundation  
Banff Jasper Collection by Pursuit  
Banff Park Lodge  
Baymag Inc.  
Eleanor Benham  
Black Diamond Group  
Nancy Blaney  
Gerry Bliss  
Heather Bolt  
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Canmore Rotary Club Charitable Foundation  
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Heather Sturm  
Joan Taylor  
Charles & Jennifer Teare  
The Grizzly Paw Pub and Brewing Company  
The Mactaggart Third Fund  
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Bev Wittmack  
Kristy Wolfe  
Wolfe Pack Warriors Foundation  
Henry Wolfs  
Women’s Shelters Canada  
Matthew Zhou



# ANDREW'S STORY



For over 40 years, my wife Margaret and I have had the good fortune to experience the beauty and offerings of the Bow Valley and its surrounding area. In 2011, we made the decision to purchase a place in Canmore, not only to enjoy the wonderful lifestyle and culture ourselves but also to share it with our family. Throughout the years, we have cherished being part of this community together. Sadly, Margaret passed away in 2014 from cancer, but she loved the area and is buried at the Canmore Cemetery. The Bow Valley holds a special place in our hearts, which is why we take pride in supporting YWCA Banff.

Margaret was always deeply passionate about women and the community. Having worked in the Oil and Gas sector in the 70s and 80s, she understood the challenges and opportunities that women faced, not only in the industry but in society as a whole. She found great joy in mentoring young women and dedicated her life to volunteering and investing in communities to foster prosperity.

While Margaret witnessed significant progress in the status of women during her lifetime, she also acknowledged that there was much more to be done. Her interest in women's entrepreneurship stemmed from recognizing the profound positive impact that women can have on a community's culture. She tirelessly sought out opportunities, catalyzed change, and transformed visions into reality.

With these values in mind, Margaret and I established the Stephens Family Foundation. Our foundation is dedicated to enhancing communities through strategic investments, creating opportunities for cultural change, inspiring individuals to achieve greatness, and recognizing and appreciating those who make a difference.

The creation of the Young Women's Leadership Award under the "Women of Distinction Awards" umbrella by YWCA

Banff is something that would have energized Margaret. In her honor, our family is delighted to partner with and invest in the YWCA for this award, which recognizes young women who serve as inspirational role models in their careers, achievements, or community-building endeavors. These remarkable young recipients embody the ideals that Margaret held dear: leadership, cultural enrichment, transforming opportunities into reality, and inspiring others.

The need for support in our community extends beyond the borders of the National Park, which is why we are thrilled about the conceptualization of Higher Ground—an extension of YWCA Banff that will be built in Canmore in the coming years. This community service hub will be essential in providing support to the most vulnerable members of our community.

Our family shares a passion for the critical work carried out by YWCA Banff and its effect on our community. We take great pride in supporting and expanding their reach through active participation in fundraising campaigns and events such as Hope for the Holidays, VINEart, and Change Makers. The Stephens Family Foundation is thrilled to collaborate with YWCA Banff in shaping a safe and inclusive Bow Valley that empowers women and their community, working towards a better future.

- Andrew Stephens (he/him)  
Stephens Family Foundation

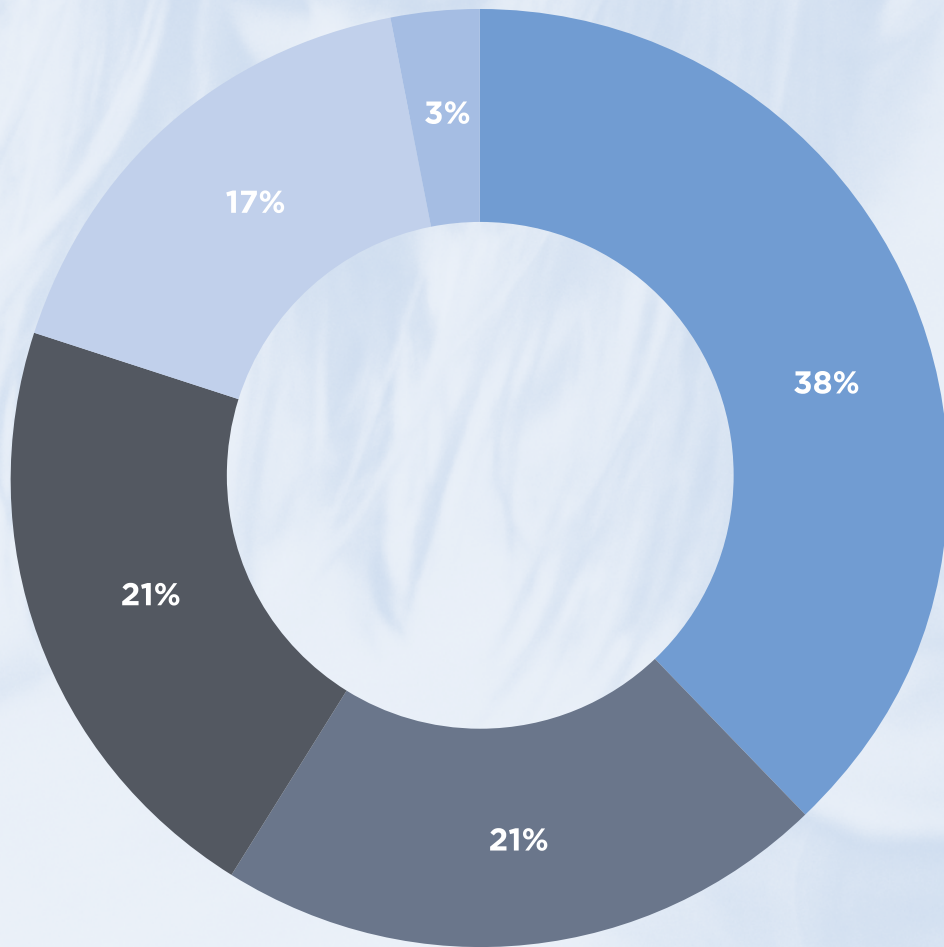




# 7: FINANCIALS

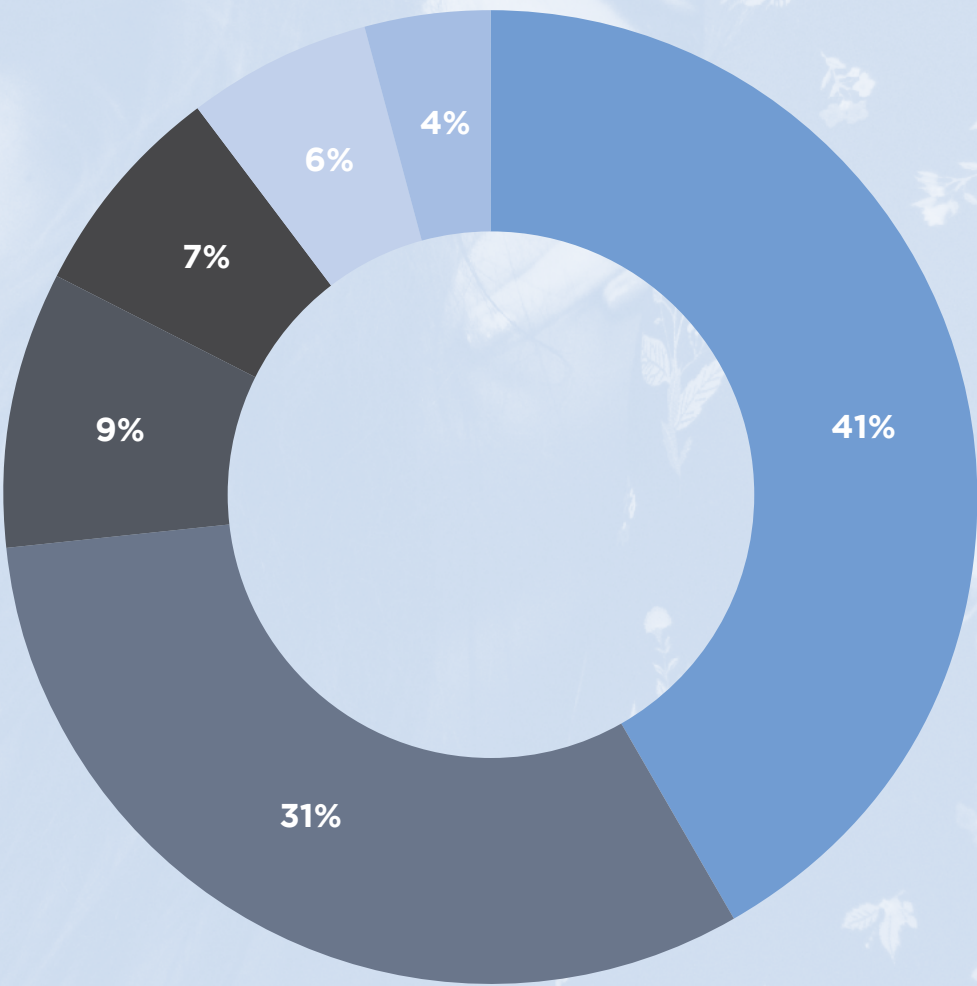
## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2022-23 REVENUE & IMPACT EXPENSES

Fiscal Year: April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023



**TOTAL  
REVENUE:  
\$4,103,998**

- GRANTS (38%)
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTAL INCOME (21%)
- SOCIAL ENTERPRISE HOTEL (21%)
- DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING (17%)
- OTHER (3%)
- PROGRAMS & SERVICES (0%)



**TOTAL  
EXPENSES  
\$3,673,511**

- PROGRAMS & SERVICES (41%)
  - Affordable Housing (34%)
  - Community Programming & Advocacy Efforts (24%)
  - Shelter & Transitional Housing (20%)
  - Homelessness (12%)
  - Programs & Services General (10%)
- BUILDING EXPENSES (31%)
- ADMINISTRATIVE (9%)
- SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (7%)
- INVESTMENT IN FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES (6%)
- OTHER (4%)



# MAKE A DONATION



*Thank you for supporting YWCA Banff.  
Your generosity will help us shape a safe,  
inclusive Bow Valley that empowers women  
and their community for a better future.*



**CLICK HERE TO DONATE NOW**





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