



Annual General Meeting Report 2023-2024



**Standing United, Sharing Ideas and Strengthening
Community Collaboration**

Victim Services of Huron County provides short term emotional support, practical assistance, and community referrals to survivors of crime, trauma, and tragic circumstance in partnership with community and emergency services.

Message from the Chair

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting for the 2023/2024 fiscal year. We are pleased to take this opportunity to celebrate the success of a committed staff team and Board of Directors. The Board Members include Chair Jo-Anne Fields, Vice Chair Robert Morris, Treasurer Mike Scott, Secretary Susan Regier, and Directors Tim Poole, Joe Steffler, and Mary-Ellen Ducharme. The Special Board volunteer is Wayne Cronin, who has been a Crisis Responder for 12 years.

The current staff team comprises Deborah Logue, Executive Director; Karen Redmond, Coordinator of Services; and Jenn Evans, Community Engagement Lead. We have also contracted services for a Bookkeeper, Carole Weber.

In my first year as the Board Chair, I have enjoyed the privilege of witnessing the overcoming of challenges, considerable growth, and remarkable achievements, all of which have underscored our team's unwavering commitment to supporting and empowering victims of crime and tragedy.

The Board is pleased to recognize that the number of survivors we have been able to support continues to grow each year. This truly reflects the public awareness and community engagement we have increased across the county. Fundraising, social media platforms and community education sessions that have been held throughout the years have also contributed to an increase in knowledge of what Victim Services Huron can do to assist people in our community.

Every volunteer, staff member, and board member rise above the norm to follow the mission of Victim Services of Huron County. Many family members, partners, and children stand proudly by their loved ones and risk their own comfort to help others in their time of need. Everyone who contributes, whether directly with victims or indirectly as a family supporter, is strengthening our county service and more cohesive for the future! Thank you.

Respectfully,
Jo-Anne Fields
Chair, Board of Directors

Treasurer's Report

Victim Services Huron is pleased to share that we remain in a financially sound position to continue our operations without any disruptions.

This year, we wrapped up hosting our last Dancing with the Stars fundraiser event. With this end of an era, we are looking to diversify our fundraising events to ensure our revenue can still support the needs of our community moving forward.

We continue to look for new ways to enhance our services, and fundraising opportunities are a key component of that. We thank everyone who has contributed to the success of these activities.

Mike Scott, Treasurer

Message from the Executive Director

Victim Services Huron appreciates the dedicated volunteers and staff that hold the organization together. The combined efforts of all Victim Services personnel ensure survivors of crime and tragedy are served quickly, competently, and with a smile. You all brighten some of our clients' darkest days.

This last year has seen an increase in calls for support primarily due to an OPP Victim Support Liaison position that resulted in 161 additional referrals from October – March. We appreciate the OPP and Town of Goderich including us in this grant opportunity and the dedication of the OPP liaison position to review every referral to the OPP that may benefit from Victim Services support.

We continue to offer support in a client-centred manner and respond to “where the client is at,” referring both geographically and emotionally. We have seen a shift in the level of need within our client population. Post-COVID has highlighted struggles being faced by our clients to not only be focussed on what the referral was based on, but typically, compound complexity to issues that may surround the crisis or impact the healing journey.

Being part of a 24-hour/365-day-a-year program can present some challenges to ensure we can provide the best quality of service possible. We rely heavily on our on-call system and support from our volunteer Crisis Responders to ensure every call for support is met how the client requests it. This may be in person or by phone. It may be during the day or in the middle of the night. When we are called, we respond no matter what the time or location is. Despite these complexities, we responded to 206 more calls for support and served 319 more people than the previous fiscal year.

Victim Services Huron prides themselves on being culturally competent and client centered!

Victim Services of Huron County has fantastic people. The volunteer Board, volunteer Crisis Responders, and the staff make this work appear easy and make support to people who need it a reality! Thank you to the staff, and a special thanks to ALL the volunteers. You are all truly appreciated.

It is my pleasure to thank the Board of Directors for their valuable work in sharing their areas of expertise and guiding our organization forward. We appreciate your energy and commitment to making VSHC valuable, accountable, and successful. Your magnitude of support and the MANY hours you contribute often go unnoticed, but I am very aware of your time, energy, and commitment, and I am grateful. The wealth of support and encouragement the Board offers is difficult to summarize and demonstrate the full appreciation it deserves.

The ongoing services and program development would not have been possible without the generous support from our donors, funders, volunteers, and stakeholders, direction from the Board of Directors and the staff's commitment. In partnership with VQRP+ (Victim Quick Response Program+), we continue to advocate for the needs within our community. We strive to better communicate the uniqueness of our program to the public. We will focus on outcomes and learn how VSHC impacts the community and how to achieve better program results.

VSHC recognizes and appreciates our supporters: the Ministry of Community Children and Social Services, with special thanks to Sam Curtin; Huron County Ontario Provincial Police, with special thanks to Inspector Jason Younan; Emergency Service Departments; Hospital services; and our Community Stakeholders.

Deborah Logue - Executive Director

Victim Services Site Partnership

When Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth found itself without a leader, Victim Services Huron was able to step in, offering not just managerial oversight but a strong, stabilizing presence. The Executive Directors proactive approach ensured continuity of services and maintained morale among the staff during a period of uncertainty. The impact of the Executive Directors support is evident not only in the operational stability achieved but, also in the continued growth and resilience of Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth as a whole.

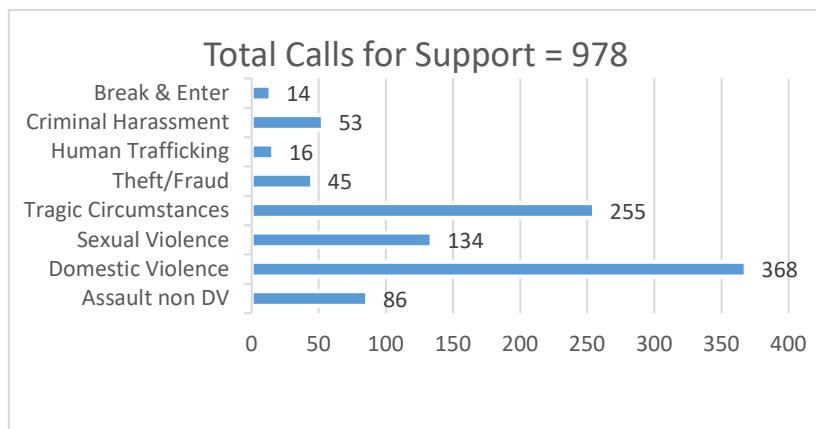
Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth has extended their gratitude to Victim Services Huron for freeing up some of the Executive Director's time to provide steadfast leadership and unwavering dedication to ensuring the Victim Services Bruce Grey Perth team was in a strong position to support survivors of crime and tragic circumstances. The Executive Directors exemplary support has not only bridged gaps but, has set a precedent for collaborative leadership that inspires and empowers us all.

Support Services

Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario

The Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario Program provides support for individuals affected by crime and tragic circumstances and is victim-centered and culturally competent. The menu of services offered by the program includes:

- 24/7 on-scene crisis intervention.
- Addressing immediate safety concerns,
- Community support sessions- needs assessment.
- Development of a personalized referral form or service plan.
- Referrals to counselling and community or government support services.
- Enhanced support and follow-up.



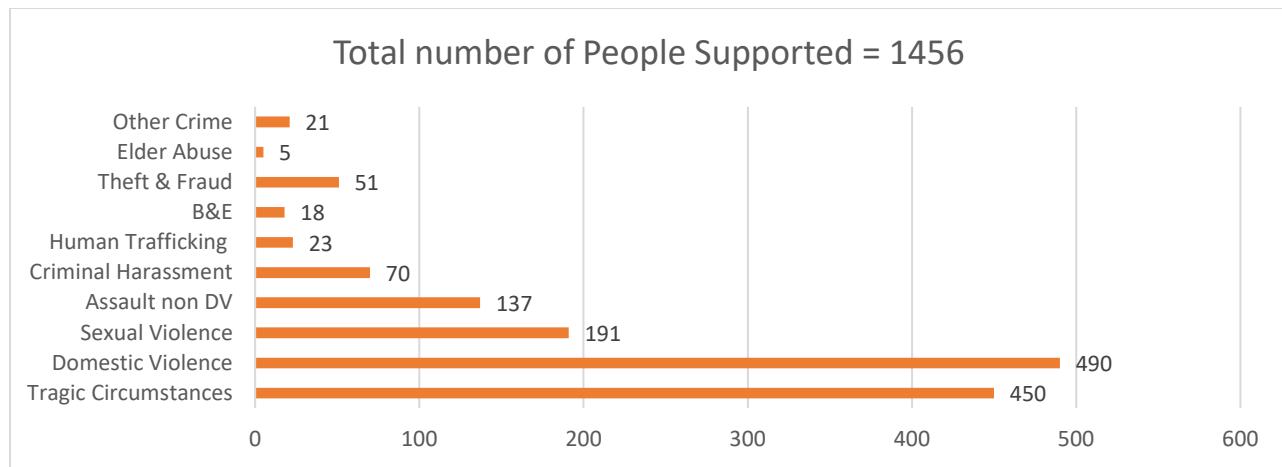
The Program objectives are:

- To provide crisis intervention, emotional support, information, and referrals to individuals affected by crime and tragic circumstances.
- To reduce the likelihood of further harm by helping a client identify and address safety issues.
- To help clients identify their needs and concerns and develop strategies to address them.

In addition to on-site crisis Intervention, other services offered through the VCAO program include:

- Safety planning for all eligible victims of crime with enhanced supports for vulnerable victims.
- Referrals to appropriate community support and services.
- Provision of cell phones for eligible victims.
- Needs assessments and customized service plans with referrals to community agencies.
- Assisting eligible victims with emergency transportation to a safe location, crime-scene cleanup, funeral expenses, emergency home repairs to items that pose a safety risk, and emergency counselling.

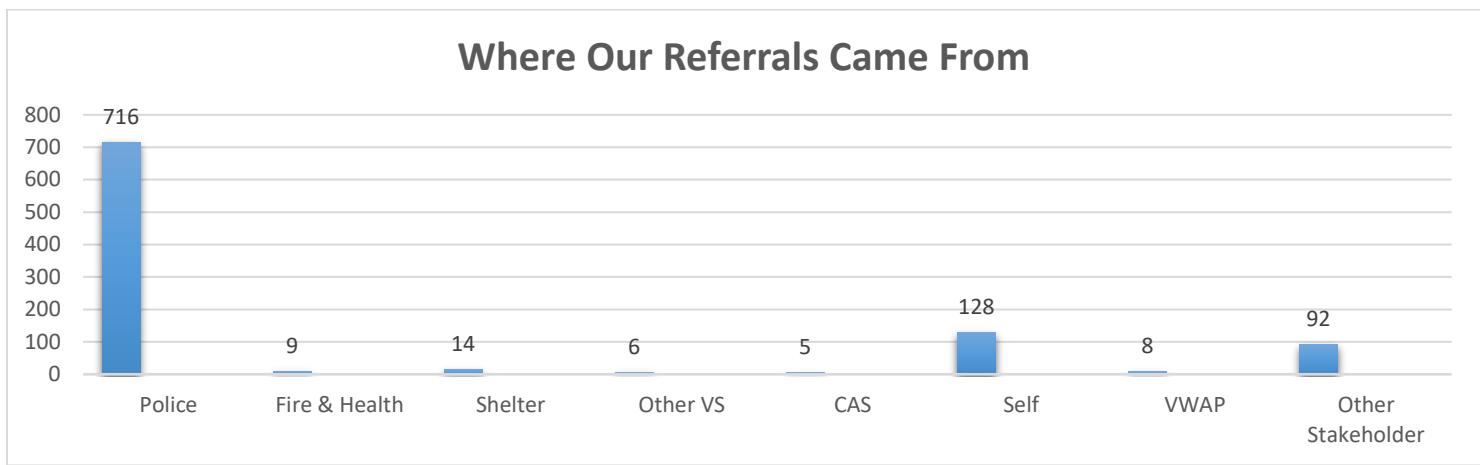
Victim Services Huron believes in and incorporates the values of being; Compassionate; Courteous; Respectful; Self Reliant; Non-Judgemental and Empowering towards all interactions with others.



Referrals

Referrals are accepted from anywhere as long as the victim resides in Huron County, they can be offered support. If the client changes Counties, they can be referred to the Victim Services in that area and continue to receive support.

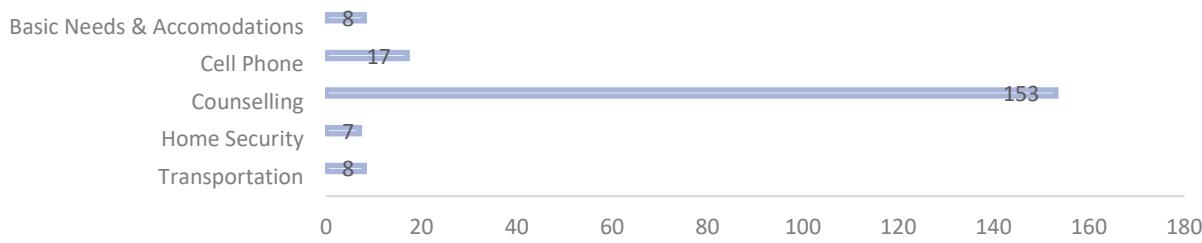
Our primary referral would be the OPP, although in recent years, self-referrals have increased significantly. The organization has worked hard to build collaborative relationships with community stakeholders, illustrated by the increase of “other” referral sources. Public speaking events, media coverage, and community presentations have also contributed to increasing knowledge of the service and provided comfort for people who want to come forward and seek assistance.



Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP+), included in the VCAO

In 2019, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board was amalgamated into the existing VQRP system to enhance its services, resulting in the + being added to the name. This program responds to the most urgent needs of victims of violent crime, offering timely access to resources and emergency funds. Victims may be eligible for financial assistance related to emergency expenses - securing premises, transportation, crime scene clean-up, funeral expenses, counselling services - short-term, early intervention. Victim Services will apply on behalf of a victim of a crime to explore what support they may be eligible for.

Families Supported Through VQRP+ = 193



Prevention & Public Education

The agency feels it is imperative to provide education and awareness to the public to reduce the amount of victimization that takes place. We have developed community training presentations on many topics we feel can support the reduction of gender-based violence crime. We have been able to present these topics within our high school system, as well as at Community events: Health Relationships, Cyber Safety and Sextortion, Human Trafficking 101, Human Trafficking Advanced Level, Impacts of Privilege, Trauma and Violence Informed Approach, Threat & Risk assessment, as well as Mental Health & Addictions.

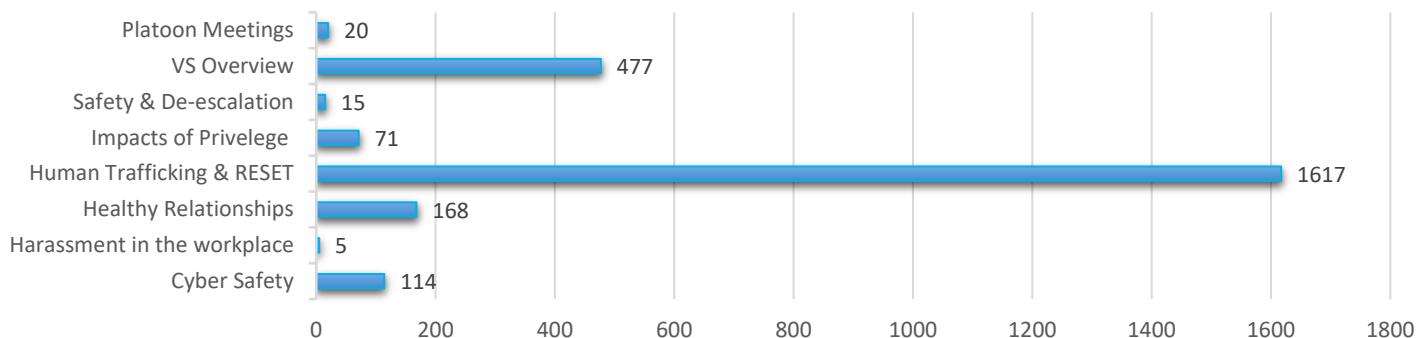
There is a stereotype that allows people to believe the issue of Human Trafficking and other Gender Based Violence crimes does not exist in Huron County. Our information and experience indicate it exists; it just looks a little different than in our neighbouring urban centres.

We have reached a total of 2,487 people with our public education program.

Vision

Education and awareness are essential to both prevention of the crime as well as reduction in trauma when supports are in place quickly.

2023-2024 Presentation Topics



Quotes From attendees

"I was surprised that I learned something from your presentation. Thank you for talking to my class."

Anonymous Grade 10 student

"We need to do more of these talks! Thank you for taking the time to share your information with my students."

Anonymous Grade 9 teacher

Fundraising Summary

Additional Funding Sources

National Victims & Survivors of Crime Awareness Week

May 17, 2023, marked the annual recognition of Victims and Survivors of Crime week in which we dedicated three community benches across Huron County in memory of recent incidents of homicide. These memorial benches serve as a lasting tribute to the lives that have been touched by tragedy and loss. They stand as a symbol of resilience, hope, and the enduring power of love and compassion. These are places where people can find solace, reflect on cherished memories, and draw strength from the shared experiences of others.

Let us also remember the individuals and families whose lives have been forever changed. They are not just statistics or names on a plaque, but individuals who lived, loved, and made an impact on the world around them. We honor their memory and pledge to continue supporting those affected by acts of violence, grief, or trauma. Doug & Marion Fischer (March 29, 2018), Laura Wiglesworth (May 10th, 2018) and Darwin Ducharme & Beverly Stevenson (March 29, 2022)

Victim Support Grant – Obtained through Huron OPP & Town of Goderich

With additional funding secured through this grant Huron OPP was able to earmark funds to support with a Victim Support Liaison position with Victim Services Huron. In partnership with Huron OPP, we were able to increase referrals by 166 incidents that would not have received the offer of Victim Services if not for this grant allocation.

We appreciate the trust from Detachment Commander Younan that entrusted Victim Services Huron to ensure the proper support would be offered to individuals that would have not typically been referred to Victim Services Huron.

Community Service Recovery Fund – Obtained through Canadian Red Cross

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Canadian Red Cross for their generous support through the Community Recovery Fund grant. This funding has played a pivotal role in enabling us to respond effectively to the evolving needs of our community, particularly during challenging times.

The Community Recovery Fund grant has empowered us to implement critical initiatives that directly benefit the training program for our volunteers. With this support, we have been able to expand our outreach efforts, enhance our service delivery, and provide essential resources to those in need.

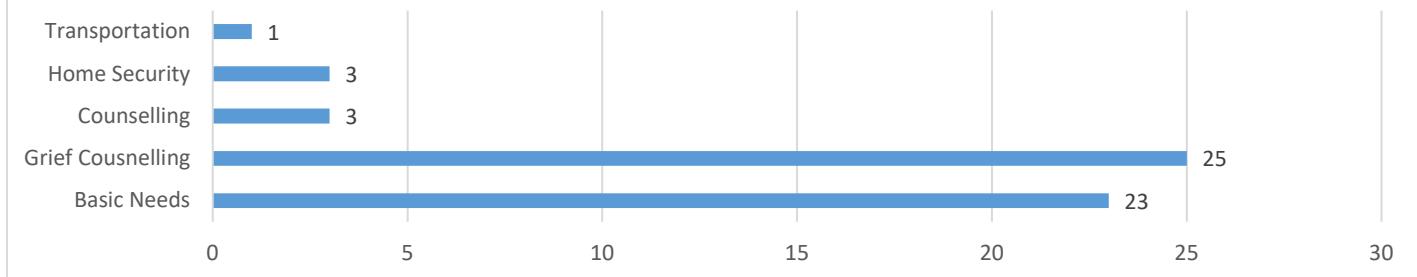
Furthermore, the grant has allowed us to innovate and adapt our programs to better meet the changing landscape of community recovery. Through collaborative partnerships and strategic investments, we have achieved impactful outcomes that would not have been possible without this grant.

General Donations

Victim Services is grateful for the support of individuals, groups, and foundations in our community, and for the generous donations throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year. All donated funds remain within Huron County to directly support survivors of crime and tragic circumstances or the volunteers that support them. The additional funding generated by donations allows us to enhance the support we can offer to those impacted by tragic circumstances, as the VQRP+ program is geared to support those victimized by crime.

We have been able to support many family members by offering them the opportunity for grief counselling and extensions to their VQRP+ counselling. Donations also covered the transportation costs associated with people making witness statements to the OPP that do not have a mode of transportation, which would not have been an option without these donations.

Families Supported Through Fundraising Efforts = 55



Thank You to All Those Who Provided General Donations

Amanda Wraith	Ben & Jenny Hogervorst	Bill & Christine Gulutzen	Blessings
Britespan	Bruce & Candice Howson	Brussels Optimists	Carole Denomy
Chantal Koster	Chris & Colleen Michie	Christine McWhinney	Community Living
Clay Bird Gun Club	Dawson Currie	Dean & Anna Vincent	Deborah Logue
Diane Martin	Donna Mae Shaddick	Dwight Hallahan	Gail Pearson
Gateway Clinton	Hay Communication	Heinrich & Agnes Frischknecht	Huron County OPP
IODE Maple Leaf Chapter	Jeff & Stephanie Allan	Jenn Evans	John & Nancy Roe
Kaitlin & Tony Watterworth	Karen Graham	Karen Redmond	Kathy & Brian Knechtel
Kayley Brunsdon	Ken & Marion McClure	Knights of Columbus 5289	Laurence Eyre
Laurene Regele	Londesboro & District Lions	Matt & Aimee Townsend	Melissa Coultes
Michelle McNichol	Monica Bakelaar	Mr. Dietmar Schroecker	OPP Vault
Parkland Fuels	Ruth & James Carter	Seaforth Ladies Golf League	Shelley Bender
St Peters CWL	Susan Stewart	Tyler & Heather Stewart	Wingham Lions

Highlights of Fundraising Events Throughout the Year

Charity Baseball Game

Wroxeter Rippers took on Wingham Hitmen for an afternoon of entertaining baseball in memory of Brayden Berberich. It was an action-packed day, filled with the opportunity to purchase silent auction items, take part in a raffle, and snack on hamburgers and hotdogs prepared by Victim Services Huron volunteers. A great day was enjoyed by all!



Thank you to all the donors and sponsors of the Community Baseball game

Bill Sawyer	Brad Harkes	Burnside Engineering	Charles & Abi Corbett
CMR Insurance	Desjardins Insurance	Duck Duck Juice	Fresh Start Bakery
Harleys Pub	Howick Mutual	Jbird Creations	Leslie's Ford
Life after loss	Lucknow Rec. Dept.	McDonaugh Insurance	Melissa James
North Perth Liquidation	Optimum Health	Pine Echo Campground	Private Motor Truck
Council of Canada	RE/MAX Wingham	Riverview Restaurant	Victim Services Huron
Watson's Home Hardware	Westburne		

Christmas Family Sponsorship

Due to the generosity of our community, Victim Services Huron was able to sponsor 12 families for Christmas. After a difficult year, these gifts brightened Christmas morning for 37 individuals! Personalized items based on a wish list supported some basic essentials (food vouchers, gas cards) and comfort items (PJs, slippers, bath products, etc.).



Thank you to all the donors and sponsors of the Christmas Family Sponsorship Program

Abi & Charles Corbett	Albers Farms	Beau Rigling	Darlene Hymers
Donna & Randy White	Hallahan Family	McLean Brother Concrete	Michelle Blake
Michelle McNichol	Patrick Armstrong	Peter & Sarah Gusso	Tanner Steffler Foundation
Terri Gulutzen			

Guns & Hose's

Huron OPP challenged Huron East Fire to a friendly competition for the crowd's entertainment at the newly renovated Brussels, Morris and Grey Community Centre.



Huron OPP "Ice Hogs" Vs Huron East "Smoke Eaters"

Thank you to the Donors and Sponsors for Guns and Hoses

Ashley Bender	Melissa Bender	Becky Beuerman	Blake Farms Ltd.
Michelle Blake	Blessings	Bluewater Golf	BGP Victim Services
Brussels Foodland	Brussels Home Hardware	Brussels Optimists	Peggy & Mike Dupree
Fisher Glass	Heather Stewart	Huron East Fire	Huron Feeding Systems
Rollin Roaster	Julie Shackleton	Sunset Golf	Turning Heads & Making Waves
Touchstone	Town of Goderich	Terri Roszi	Brussels Optimists
Home Hardware	Orr Insurance -Brussels	Huron Feeding Systems	Huron East Fire Stations

Dancing With the Stars

This was our 15th Dancing with the Stars event. After taking a break during Covid years, we were able to pull together another fantastic final performance. We thank all the participants that pour their hearts and soul into the event to ensure the audience enjoyed a stellar performance. Dancing With the Stars has been our primary fundraising event for many years. Over the years, we have been able to diversify our fundraising efforts and share across multiple events. With that growth, we have passed on the event to another organization to benefit from within Huron County. The next Dancing With The Stars will support Huron Hospice, organized by Carole Webber and Brian Fisher.

Dancing With the Stars 2024 Participants



Aaron Bos & Melanie Foster, Dwight Hallahan & JoAnn Robinson, Tracey Sills & Jason Lamont, Brian Fisher & Carole Webber, Scott Miller & Natasha Hickey

Thank You to the Donors and Sponsors for Dancing with the Stars

Agway metals Inc	Albers Farm	Allure	Bluewater Golf
Blyth East Street Dance	Blyth Festival	Blyth Inn	Bonnie Walter
Brads Automotive	Brian and Bonnie O'Reilly	Bruce Whitaker	Clinton Gateway Casino
Compass Minerals	Dealz Liquidation Warehouse	Drayton Theatre	Exeter Canadian Tire
Exeter Golf	Fisher Glass	Foxton Fuels	Goderich Place
Great Land Farms	Growling Gator	Hockey Hall of Fame	Huron Tractor
Integrated Health Sciences Clinic	Jillian's	Jokey	Life After Loss Grief Support
Maitland Family Dental	Marcc Apparel	McGee Motors	Mclean Brother Concrete
Michelle Ariss	Mike & Peggy Dupree	Mike Scott	NGR Sanctuary
Ontario Lottery & Gaming Co.	Orr Insurance	Pete Klaver	Pine Echo Camp
Private Motor Transport Council Ca.	Seaforth Golf	Sills Home Hardware	Sunset Golf
The Albion	The Livery	The Work Shop	Townsend Tire
Wayne & Melita Cronin	White Squirrel	Zehrs	

Front Line Volunteer Crisis Responders

Departing Front Line Crisis Responders

Julia Pearson-Boyd	Kim Cuthbertson	Nancy Hamlin	Alex Harmen
Janette Holmes	Jess Keller	Kathy Knechtel	Katelyn Little
Mitch McIntyre	Lois Reinink	JoAnn Robinson	Patty Vandermeer
Katie Wilson			

Volunteer Quote

People remember not what you said but how you made them feel, and that makes a difference.

Anonymous

Active Responders

Brittany Allingham (2024)	Shelley Bender (2009)	Alicia Bennewies (2018)	Brenda Burkholder (2004)
Natalie Campbell (2023)	Wayne Cronin (2012)	Karissa Denomme (2024)	Peter Edgar (2023)
Brandy Gagnier (2022)	Nick Geleynse (2024)	Bonnie Hastings (2022)	Holly Howson (2018)
Brandon Koetsier (2020)	Jacqui Laporte (2010)	Bobbi Jo Liu (2018)	Hayley Morgan (2024)
Joni Reinhart (2011)	Shawn Reinink (2022)	Nicole Russell (2022)	Megan Shouldice (2023)
Marly Squire (2022)	Andrea Stevenson (2024)	Tyra Sitler (2023)	Martina Tait (2021)
Marion Taylor (2008)	Wagner Valdez (2018)	Sarah Whetung (2024)	Tim Wylie (2017)

Current Office Staff

Executive Director – Deborah Logue
Coordinator of Services – Karen Redmond
Community Engagement Lead – Jenn Evans

Team Leaders

Shelley Bender
Brenda Burkholder
Jacqui Empson-Laporte
Kathy Knechtel

Board of Directors

Jo-Anne Fields (Chair)
Robert Morris (Vice Chair)
Susan Regier (Secretary)
Mike Scott (Treasurer)
Joe Steffler (Director)
Mary-Ellen Ducharme (Director)
Wayne Cronin (Board Liaison)

Departed Office Staff

Sarah Campbell – Community Engagement Lead
Dawson Currie – Community Engagement Lead

Brandon Koetsier

Years of Service Awards

Kathy Knechtel – 15 Years (2007 with a year off)

Brenda Burkholder – 20 Years (2004)

20 Years in Service

Victim Services Huron County (VSHC) has reached a significant milestone, celebrating 20 years of unwavering commitment and support to individuals impacted by crime and tragic circumstances. The impact of Victim Services Huron on the community is profound, providing a lifeline to those in crisis and fostering a safer, more supportive environment for all residents.

Key achievements include:

Support to Thousands: Over the past 20 years, VSH has supported thousands of individuals and families, offering them hope and a path to recovery.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Strong partnerships with local law enforcement, healthcare providers, and community organizations have enhanced the support network for victims.

Volunteer Engagement: Hundreds of dedicated volunteers have contributed their time and skills, embodying the spirit of community service. A highly engaged Board of Directors has provided guidance and mentorship to the organization.

Awareness and Advocacy: VSHC's efforts in raising awareness and advocating for victims' rights have led to improved policies and increased public understanding of victimization.

Embracing Challenges: The organization has weathered ups and downs and been able to correct and learn from various experiences to ensure that the agency came out stronger.

Victim Services Huron's 20-year journey is a testament to the power of compassion, dedication, and community. As we honor this milestone, we also look to the future with hope and determination, ready to continue making a difference in the lives of those in need. We thank our community for standing by us and offering ongoing support over the past 20 years! Here's to many more years of support, advocacy, and healing.

Highlighting Brenda's 20 Years of Achievement

This year, as Victim Services Huron celebrates its 20th anniversary, we take a moment to honour Brenda Burkholder, a dedicated volunteer whose unwavering commitment and service have been instrumental in shaping the organization. Brenda's 20 years of selfless dedication have left an incredible mark on Victim Services Huron and the countless individuals and families she has supported.

Brenda has been a reliable first responder and Team Leader, providing immediate emotional and practical support to victims during their most vulnerable moments. Her calm and compassionate presence has provided comfort and stability for many. As an experienced volunteer, Brenda has mentored dozens of new volunteers, sharing her knowledge and skills to ensure a high standard of care.

We want to thank Brenda and recognize the profound impact one individual can have on an organization and a community. Her commitment, compassion, and tireless advocacy has made a difference in countless lives, embodying the spirit and mission of Victim Services Huron.

Looking Ahead, the Future is Bright.....

