



Your Truth. Our Purpose.

2023 - 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

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23-24 Staff and Students

Lisa Miller, Executive Director

Julia Dima, Office Manager + Volunteer Coordinator

Mary Zwane, Counsellor

Savanna Belitski, Counsellor

Janice Giroux, Counsellor

Chantelle Priel, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Hannah Matz, Practicum Student

Board of Directors

Amy Baldwin, President

Kennya Bhimji, Vice President

Patrick Innes, Past President

Don Hansen, Treasurer

Kelsey Lagus, Secretary

Brittini Schlechte, Director

Tracey Dunnigan, Director

Stephanie Kos, Director



Who We Are

The Regina and Area Sexual Assault Centre (Regina Sexual Assault Centre Inc.) is a registered non-profit charitable organization that has been providing support in the Regina area for 50 years to individuals who have experienced sexual and interpersonal violence. The Centre's work is guided by a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive and client-directed philosophy.

It was originally established as the Regina Women's Community Centre, which provided counselling and support to women who had experienced domestic and sexual violence. Staff supported women through police reporting, court processes and medical procedures, as well as undertaking advocacy activities related to justice and health reform. The organization was incorporated in 1975. In 2013, the Centre changed its name to the Regina Sexual Assault Centre to be more inclusive and reflect the diverse people we serve. True to its roots, the Centre continues to provide free counselling, accompaniments, a 24-hour crisis line, public education and advocacy activities.

The Centre is funded graciously by the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of justice, project grants, and a generous community of donors.

As we grow and the demand for specialized services for survivors does too, we have worked hard to develop the skills and training for our counselling team. RSAC prioritizes enhanced education for counsellors to ensure best-practice therapeutic approaches are offered.

All staff counsellors are Masters educated, and trained in best-practice approaches to trauma therapy, including Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a "gold standard" therapy for trauma. In 2022, two counsellors were also trained in EMDR for Children, ensuring we can provide the best practice therapy methods to the children we serve, and in 2024, we hired a counsellor with an interest in and experience with Somatic Experiencing (SE) Therapy - another best-practice trauma therapy approach. This counsellor has started formal training in SE.

We continue to work tirelessly in our public education offerings, increasing the work we do with disciplines and institutions whose work intersects with sexual violence victims and survivors. We continue to work with the Regina Police Service and Moose Jaw Police Service to provide quarterly reviews through the Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review (VACR). We provide training to new recruits at the Saskatchewan Police College, which means RSAC's expertise can impact police response across the province. Additionally, we offer curated education to community organizations, and groups directly impacted by sexualized violence and trauma.

Since 2020, RSAC has offered services at a satellite office in Moose Jaw. Approximately 80% of the clients seen in Moose Jaw are children under 16 years. In January 2024, RSAC made a big move forward by finding a new home at 1040 Winnipeg Street. This space is larger, more accessible, and centralized to ensure we can meet the needs and requests expressed to us by our clients.

How We Work



MISSION

The purpose of RSAC is to provide expert service, support and education to those impacted by sexual violence.



VISION

As a leader and advocate for survivors of sexual violence, RSAC works within Regina and area to ensure anyone affected by sexual violence is supported.



VALUES

Confidentiality, professionalism, inclusiveness, respect, compassion, and qualified service.

President's Report

The Regina and Area Sexual Assault Centre (RSAC) began as a grassroots organization and our community connections are deep and strong. As I look back over this year, I am proud of the new roots developing for RSAC.

In May, we hosted an open house event for community partners, funders, volunteers, and media to showcase our new location and the services RSAC continues to provide for some of the most vulnerable community members. Aligning with Sexual Assault Awareness Month, it was a huge success with over 50 people in attendance. Thank you to Sherwood Co-op for the donation in support of food and coffee bar for our open house attendees!

Our satellite office in Moose Jaw continues to provide accessible services to youth in the community. RSAC furthered its community engagement through the first Victim Advocate Case Review (VACR) with the Moose Jaw Police Service and Moose Jaw Transition House.

Work continued on updated comprehensive Human Resources policies, to ensure a safe work environment for our staff and healing space for our clients. The RSAC Board of Directors are in active conversations about diversifying revenue streams through responsible investments to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization. A sign of moving past the COVID-19 era, we repaid the CEBA loans, a source of financial stability during an uncertain time.



We said farewell to our McKay Street office in December 2023. So much healing, important relationships, tools and skills built, and valuable work was done within those walls. Our new office space, located at 1040 Winnipeg Street and was renovated to fit our mission and the needs of our clients. It is exciting to have lots of space for staff to conduct counselling sessions, with space for practicum students and additional future staff. It includes a dedicated play therapy space for our ever growing list of child clients to enjoy. The private, welcoming lobby space is a serene and plant-filled place for clients to prepare for sessions or grab a snack or drink.

The Board of Directors is grateful for Lisa's leadership and the staff's work facilitating a smooth office move and welcoming clients to the new space.

**- Amy Baldwin,
RSAC Board President**

Executive Director's Report



It is hard to believe that nine years has nearly passed for me in the role of Executive Director. Watching the evolution of the organization has been satisfying - from how we work with community, to our advocacy, to counsellors' qualifications, to our role in mental health capacity in our community. I play the supporting role to some very inspirational and transformative work.

There are a number of highlights from this past year to mention. The first is that our child counsellor, Mary Zwane, completed her Level 1 Play Therapy course and is now a member of the Association of Play Therapists. This training was vital in helping her incorporate the use of toys, sand, paper and pen into her work with children. As she tells me, "Children don't communicate with words. They use behaviour and play to express their feelings." Mary's work with children is often difficult but we see the changes in her young clients and the transformation is beautiful. She is a gentle and skilled therapist.

The second gift was the hiring of Savanna Belitski as counsellor. Savanna comes with years of experience in gender-based violence and is committed to those we serve.

She is seeing clients ages 14 years and older and has shared some beautiful work that has happened in her therapeutic space. In Spring 2024, she completed the first module of Somatic Experiencing Therapy, something that she felt aligned well with how she works with clients. She will be completing the second module in Fall 2024.

Additionally, our counsellor Janice Giroux, who was a previous contract counsellor, is now filling a maternity leave, and has started EMDR training, a well regarded modality for trauma therapy. Janice is a gentle kind individual, and is also a registered nurse with years of working in psychiatric care. Janice works with clients ages 16 years and older.

Chantelle Priel, our Education and Outreach Coordinator continues to be exceptionally busy with both public and professional education, as well as supporting some advocacy work for RSAC clients. Chantelle has done a remarkable job with presentations and learning how to adapt the delivery and dialogue to support learning for diverse audiences. Some of the highlights include Regina and Moose Jaw Police Block Training, 3 hour presentations to recruit classes at the Saskatchewan Police College, the annual collaborative Sexual Violence Prevention campaign with partner agencies, monthly presentations to Pine Lodge participants, presentations to U of R classes, contributor to the Child Trauma Research Centre Living Library, presentations to Corrections staff, and the list goes on.

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Executive Director's Report Cont.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Julia Dima, our Office Manager, who we hired in early 2023. Julia is another person with incredible skills related to technology, written communication, creative content and graphics. She additionally manages the recruitment of volunteers for our crisis line and does the scheduling, which is a big task. She has been such a great addition to our team and has streamlined and simplified all of our roles, leaving me precious time to strategize and think about problem-solving. Julia is always willing to support the rest of the team however she can and is caring to our clients and crisis line callers.

I have enjoyed a year of making more connections with community leaders and sharing thoughts and possibilities with those who I think might make good collaborators and partners.

I was also able to complete, with the help of a contractor, our HR policy manual and have started the framework for the Service Delivery policies which (hurray!) is the last piece of the puzzle, after revamping our articles and bylaws, board governance and HR. This work isn't so public or emotion-evoking as our daily work with community, but it matters for smooth functioning and support for all.

I have also enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to quite a few media articles and events, including a public Human Trafficking event, a press conference for the government's Human Trafficking Campaign, the Evan Bray Show and multiple articles and interviews about the decision by government to ban third parties from delivering any classroom education related to sexual health.

In 2023-2024, RSAC counsellors provided **981** clinical counselling sessions.



Our staff and volunteers answered 183 calls to our 24/7 crisis and support line.



79 community and school education sessions were delivered by RSAC this year.



“ Ethics, professionalism, compassion, counsellor qualifications, policies, and technology - in all these areas, RSAC is dedicated to the highest standards for client care and community engagement. ”

- Lisa Miller, Executive Director

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Executive Director's Report Cont.

This last point has been one of the most disappointing times in my work at RSAC. Between my past work at Regina Police Service and RSAC, I see the damage that is happening to children and how little is being done to prevent it. I cannot describe how difficult it is for me to know that in schools across Saskatchewan there are children who desperately need to know there are safe adults to talk to and that what is happening to them is not their fault. Although I am proud of the past work RSAC has done in prevention education, I would be satisfied if I knew there was a standard curriculum and program to ensure every child receives this important information.

I want to highlight the ongoing work with Regina and Moose Jaw Police Services with the Violence Against Women Advocate Case Review project. We are still looking to get traction with Moose Jaw, as the project has not been operational for as long, but Regina Police have proven to be excellent partners. There have been a number of initiatives as a result of the VACR work and we are hearing from clients that their experiences of reporting have been overall quite positive. We still have much work to do at the prosecutor and judiciary level but one step at a time.



As we reflect on the systemic ways children are being let down by policy decisions that limit their access to safety education, we are also thinking of every child who lost their safety and lives in residential schools, and those who continue to be impacted by generational trauma. We are committed to a future and society where no child faces harm, hurt, and discrimination, and where school is a place of safety and learning.

Challenges we are foreseeing for this upcoming year, which began to show themselves mid-year are significant declines in donations and changes to how and why we receive referrals from other agencies, particularly since the introduction of rapid access counselling in our communities. We are looking at how we can diversify our revenue sources to manage this risk to our current services and future growth.

I look forward to another year of inspirational work and partnerships with the great staff and board of RSAC.

**- Lisa Miller,
RSAC Executive Director**

Our Annual Impact

335

community members impacted by trauma, abuse, substance use disorder, and other harms, received live customized presentations on understanding the impacts of trauma from our Education and Outreach Coordinator in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



"I honestly feel that the counselling provided to survivors of abuse is unparalleled by any other organization available in the province."
- RSAC Client

A GROWING NEED:

RSAC Counsellors provided nearly 1,000 clinical counselling sessions last year, and saw 87 new clients. In the same time, 118 new clients were added to our waitlist.



Trauma-Informed expert information for survivors available anywhere, anytime:

Accessing timely, accurate, and trauma-informed knowledge about sexualized violence and its impacts can make a meaningful difference for a survivor, especially as they navigate a journey of healing and recovery. In Early 2023, we launched our online pre-recorded webinars on understanding



and healing through trauma. The webinars are free, fast and anonymous to download and view.

They are shared with anyone who calls RSAC seeking services and any service providers who request them to support clients. In the last fiscal year, they were watched by 80 unique viewers.

The 2023 #ChooseToSee campaign reached over 7,000 people. 220 pins, 280 stickers and 220 pens were distributed across our community.



Our 2023 #ChooseToSee Awareness Campaign took place for Sexual Violence Awareness Month in May. We challenged our community to not just see, but to choose to act. These stickers, pins, and pens helped get the message out!



Our Work in Action



Left: RSAC celebrated the 41 year commitment of our longest-serving volunteer Mirtha Rivera as she marked her retirement from the crisis line by naming a \$500 honorarium to support community volunteerism in her name. The Mirtha's Love Volunteer Award is open to any community applicants every year.

Right: Each year in May, RSAC participates in "Moose Hide Campaign Day", an Indigenous-led movement aimed at ending violence against women through engaging men and allies in speaking up against violence. Staff wore pins, promoted the event, and partnered with the Regina Transition House and Regina Public Library to raise awareness through a book display at various RPLs relating to the subject.



Our 2023 #ChooseToSee campaign challenged people to take the "Choose to Act" pledge and tell us how they will personally commit to helping prevent sexualized violence. Here is what some pledge signers had to say:

"I will continue to speak out against the rape culture that persists in our society and refuse to stay silent when I witness problematic behaviours and actions, even when it's uncomfortable. I will engage others in conversations about the reality of rape culture, the pervasiveness of sexualized violence, and how it harms all of us. I will continue to believe and support survivors and I will encourage others to do the same."

"I will no longer be quiet during inappropriate conversation because of the group and fear of exclusion."

"I choose to see the impact of sexual violence by being a part of my community, listening to their stories, and being aware of how common this is."

"I will believe all survivors and be extremely cautious about underestimating the power imbalance that may arise/be involved. I choose to see the potential harms that I am sure to witness daily. I choose to act with kindness and be confident in my ability to engage in difficult conversations in order to contribute to making change happen."



Just before the 2023 fall school semester, the Ministry of Education introduced their "Parental Inclusion Policy" which effectively stripped students under 15 of their right to use a chosen name or pronoun without parental permission, but also included a ban of any third party educators and community groups from coming to classrooms. In previous years, RSAC provided age-appropriate and curriculum appropriate violence prevention education in schools, from our Kids on the Block safety puppet show for young children to presentations on consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships to high school students. Since this time, we've been advocating for a change to this policy to ensure all students can access expert-driven knowledge around sexual violence and abuse prevention. We have also showed our support of the many 2SLGBTQIA+ kids in schools who have been hurt by this policy by attending rallies and speaking out publicly.



Education in Action

2023-2024 was a notable year for education and advocacy work. While the second half of the year posed unprecedented challenges due to changes in government policy, we also had new opportunities to provide expert-led education and form new relationships within the community.

In keeping with our commitment to ensuring trauma-informed and expertise-driven knowledge is available to community members who face intersections of harm and vulnerability, we continued to work with organizations like Pine Lodge Addiction and Recovery to provide monthly presentations on trauma and sexualized violence. We also provided presentations to Regina Transition House, Soul's Harbour Rescue Mission, Aids Program South Saskatchewan, and Ranch Ehrlo. In total, 335 individuals were reached.

Beyond our community work, RSAC works diligently with service providers of health and justice to ensure best outcomes for survivors interacting with these systems. Through a successful partnership with Regina Police Service, RSAC has started delivering Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigation presentations to recruits at the Saskatchewan Police College, meaning our expertise is reaching every municipal police agency in the province. Additionally, we provided block training presentations to both Regina and Moose Jaw police. This direct education reached 315 police officers.

In the fall of 2023, RSAC learned that the new "Parental Inclusion Policy" introduced by the Ministry of Education would also result in the banning of any third party educators in Saskatchewan schools.

Prior to this, RSAC was actively involved in classrooms, providing age and curriculum appropriate education on personal safety, abuse prevention and awareness, consent, boundaries, and safe relationships. We delivered 10 presentations to 250 students before the ban. We continue to advocate for and work with levels of government to bring child and youth friendly violence prevention education back to classrooms.

“Education and advocacy decreases the culture of silence by normalizing conversations about S/V trauma, and validating that survivors are not alone and it was never their fault. Through this work, many survivors reveal they have never learned about or disclosed their abuse prior to speaking with us, feeling believed and hopeful for the first time as a result.

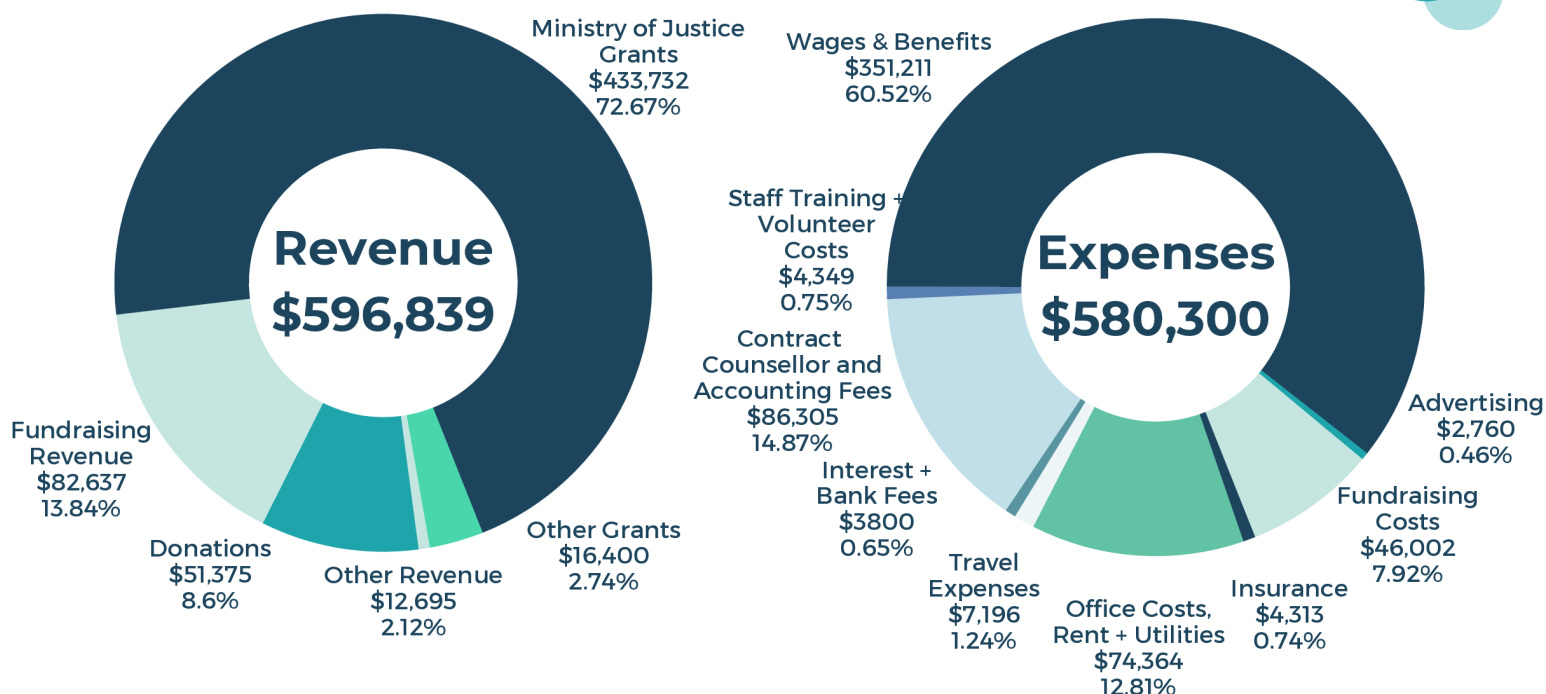
Service providers in helping professions may feel uncomfortable with the subject or ill-equipped to respond to a disclosure. Education enhances their response by creating a deeper understanding of the subject and increased empathy for survivors.

Community awareness truly can drastically change the trajectory of someone's healing.

**- Chantelle Priel,
RSAC Public Education & Outreach Coordinator**

Despite challenges, we continue to seek new ways to reach our community members where they are and ensure our customized and expertise-driven presentations, webinars, information, and resources are available and continuing to make a difference for individuals.

Financial Summary



Our Funders

RSAC counts on the generous contributions of grantors, government partnerships, and a caring and engaged community of donors to deliver the vital services we do every day. We want to thank our Funders, The Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, Government of Canada Department of Justice, South Saskatchewan Community Foundation, Prairie Action Foundation, and hundreds of kind donors who contributed 1400 financial gifts in the 23-24 fiscal year. We also wish to thank our dedicated volunteers, without whom we simply could not deliver 24/7 holistic support to those who need it most.



Community Partnerships & Engagements

Ministry of Justice, Community Safety and Wellbeing
City of Regina
Regina Police Service
Moose Jaw Partners Against Violence
Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program
Moose Jaw Police Service
Moose Jaw Family Services
YWCA Regina
Saskatchewan Police College
Regina Transition House
Sofia House
Pine Lodge Addiction Recovery
RCMP/Regina Police Victim Services
Moose Jaw Transition House
Provincial Association of Transition Houses
Enough Already
Law Society of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre
Battlefords and Area Sexual Assault Centre
Creative Options Regina
Saskatchewan Polytechnic (SIAST)
Regina Early Learning Centre
Cowessess First Nation
Regina Catholic School Division
Saskatchewan Science Centre
University of Regina

Together with community, incredible things are possible. RSAC thanks all our community partners and those we engage with for working with us in 2023 and 2024

REGINA AND AREA SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRE

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