



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

After becoming pregnant at age 16, Alexia came to Jessie's for the first time. "It was a really scary time in my life. I felt really alone because a lot of my so-called friends disappeared and weren't really there for me. But when I walked into Jessie's, I finally felt supported by people that were in the same situation as me," she explains, adding that she appreciated that there was never any judgement.

Alexia had planned to spend the first year of motherhood with her baby, and then complete her high school credits. But when the pandemic hit, everything changed. After a year-long delay, when her daughter Violet was about two years old, Alexia enrolled in the Jessie's school program. In partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), this program allows pregnant youth and young moms to take a range of high school courses at their own pace. While Alexia completed her classes at Jessie's, Violet attended daycare at the centre.

At her graduation in June 2023, Alexia not only received her high school diploma, but her hard work was celebrated with the first-ever Lynn Murphy Achievement Award. Commemorating former Jessie's teacher Lynn Murphy, who passed away in July 2022, the award recognizes a student who demonstrates growth and a commitment to learning.

"It was such an honour," Alexia reflects, adding that Lynn was such a beloved teacher at Jessie's and had a lasting impact on the countless young parents she taught over the years.

This fall will be a busy season of building new connections for both mom and daughter: Alexia is starting the arborist apprenticeship program at Humber College, and Violet is beginning Junior Kindergarten.

Thanks to her positive experiences at Jessie's, Alexia became a speaker for our community education program, visiting nearby schools to share her story and teach students about Jessie's. Building on that opportunity, she now also does similar speaking engagements for United Way Greater Toronto. "Jessie's connected me with a lot of resources," says Alexia. "I know that I wouldn't have been able to do all of this without them."

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Jessie's - The June Callwood Centre for Young Women (Jessie's)** is located on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat people, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

We are grateful to have the opportunity to work and learn on this sacred land, previously known as Tkaronto and traditionally Turtle Island, that is still home to many Indigenous people.

## AFRICAN ANCESTRAL STATEMENT

We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent, recognizing the long-standing generations of Black people in Canada and celebrating the legacy of their contributions towards building this country.

We acknowledge those who came here as migrants, either in this generation or in generations past, and those who came here involuntarily, including those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery.

Jessie's will continue to work towards addressing ongoing health inequities and systemic injustices for Indigenous and Black youth, and we are committed to dismantling racism and will work to create change as we strive for justice for all.



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For over 40 years, Jessie's has been supporting pregnant youth, young parents, and their children as they reach for their full potential as adults and new parents. This past year has been marked by many positive changes at Jessie's, and we are thrilled to celebrate them with our community.

In the summer of 2022, we made an impactful decision that has allowed us to support more young parents than ever before: We extended our age of intake to 21 and under (up from 19), meaning that we are now supporting pregnant youth, young parents and their children later and longer. Since making this change, 50% of our intakes have been aged 20 and 21, showing how much this change was needed to support our community.

Another big change began to roll out right at the end of the fiscal year. In early 2023, we began planning the transition back to fully in-person programming, implementing the changes in April. Although we had proudly offered modified services since the beginning of the pandemic, we recognize how important in-person support and connection is for our clients. It's incredible to see these young people build confidence, share their successes with one another, and gain support from their peers.

Creating meaningful opportunities for participants to connect, share, and learn from one another is an essential part of our role in supporting the families at Jessie's. We're proud to be a safe space where participants can find guidance as they build more connections and grow their community.

I am so grateful for everyone who comes together to make Jessie's such a wonderful place. Thank you to our incredible staff members and Board of Directors for your guidance and dedication in supporting pregnant and parenting youth and their children. Thank you, as well, to our loyal volunteers who have helped to make our community a brighter place.

Finally, thank you to our community funding partners and to every one of our donors for helping us create a future where all young families have the support, community connections, resources, and information they need to thrive.

Joanna Mendez  
Executive Director



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

Our strategic plan will guide Jessie's in developing and delivering the essential services and programs that respond to the unique needs of the pregnant youth and young families that we serve. It also positions us to work toward a future where all young families have the support, community connections, resources, and information they need to thrive.

## Jessie's Centre will...

**Invest:** We will make our organization stronger and more sustainable for the future by assessing our hiring and on-boarding process to improve staff engagement and retention. We'll also improve our adaptability and responsiveness to meeting participants' needs and community trends.



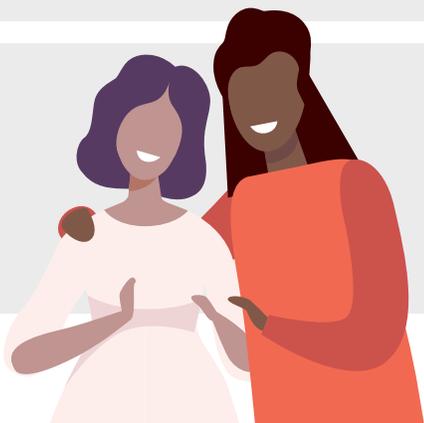
**Grow:** To serve more young people, we will increase and improve our sustainable housing options. We'll achieve this by conducting an external evaluation of our housing program, providing support to participants who are transitioning into independent living, and expanding our housing options through new and innovative approaches.



**Strengthen:** To ensure we are always meeting our participants' needs, we will strengthen our core services and programming. This will include continuing to expand our children's programming to ensure children are meeting their development milestones, and solidifying the parent-child relationship by focusing on the health and well-being of participants and their children.



**Connect:** To continue to increase inclusivity, belonging and engagement within our community, we will work to build stronger connections with Black, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ+ groups. To support this, we will invest in staff training to increase our knowledge and capacity in working with diverse communities.



# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

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# BUILDING CONNECTIONS



## Food Connect

With today's rising inflation and the high cost of food, building a brighter future can be financially difficult for many of the young families who come through our doors – so that's why we piloted our Food Connect program last year. Thanks to the support of our generous community and donors, it is now a core program, providing up to 12 families with a bag of fresh produce, rice, canned soups, bread, and more every month. Each family also receives a grocery store gift card so they can purchase other items they may need. As a core feature of the program, we invite other community organizations to join us at Food Connect each month so our young families can build connections and learn about other food programs around the city.

## Counselling

After noticing an increase in the number of participants who are from Latin America, we developed more ways to support these youth as they build strong connections at Jessie's. We started by hiring a Spanish-speaking counsellor, and with this addition, we've seen an even greater increase in new intakes from the Hispanic/Latin community. We also improved access to information offered in Spanish at Jessie's by translating our monthly calendar and several resources, including our redesigned website, which launched in fall 2023. Thanks to these important language accommodations, we've seen our Spanish-speaking participants flourish as they've found greater support and community within our centre.

## Outreach

Over the past year, the Jessie's Outreach Committee focused on spreading the word about our increased intake age limit. As part of this outreach initiative, we ran our first-ever TTC marketing campaign, with Jessie's ads displayed along TTC bus routes identified as being the most popular lines our participants travelled. Based on Toronto Public Health statistics, these routes are in neighbourhoods with the highest rates of births for young women in Toronto. Our Outreach Committee also built deeper connections within our community through participating in local events, including Na-Ma-Res Pow Wow, Family Pride, and the Junior Caribbean Carnival parade.

We're also supporting active and former Jessie's participants through our new newsletter, *The Vibe* at Jessie's. In addition to providing updates on what's happening at our centre, it also provides information and resources to participants and alumni, supporting them in continuing to build valuable community connections.



# PROGRAMS BY NUMBERS

At Jessie's, we support pregnant youth and young parents in rising to their full potential. It's because of generous donors like you that we can provide our families with the resources they need to reach a better tomorrow.

## IN 2022-2023, 435 YOUNG WOMEN AND CHILDREN RECEIVED SERVICES AT JESSIE'S.

**13** PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN OUR SCHOOL PROGRAM

**3,633** COUNSELLING SESSIONS DELIVERED

**70** PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED HOUSING STABILIZATION SUPPORTS

**60** CHILD DEVELOPMENT SCREENS COMPLETED (ASQ-3® & ASQ-E)

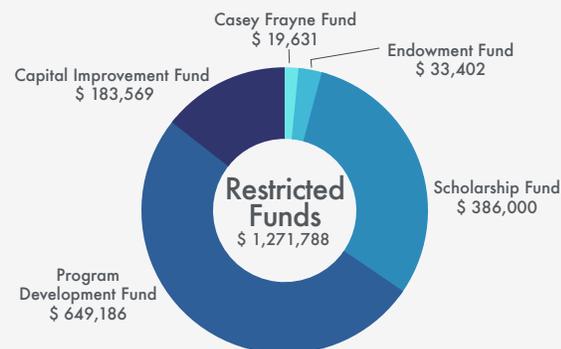
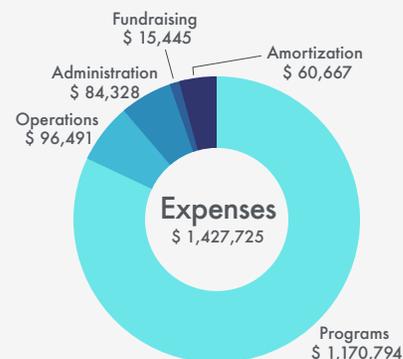
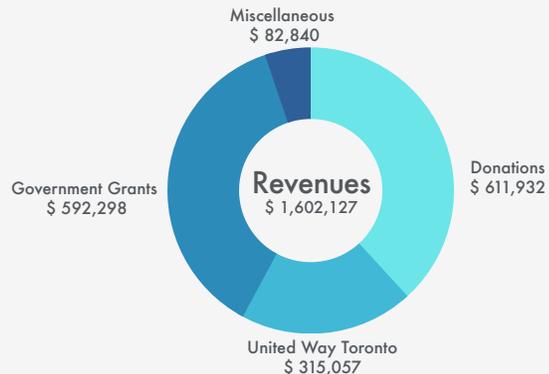
**354** WELL-WOMAN AND WELL-BABY VISITS

**105** PARTICIPANTS ACCESSED OUR FOOD CONNECT PROGRAM

**6,709** WARM MEALS SERVED

# FINANCIALS

Summary of Revenue and Expenses  
April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023



FOR COMPLETE AUDITED STATEMENTS, VISIT [JESSIECENTRE.ORG](http://JESSIECENTRE.ORG)

To learn more about Jessie's Centre, please visit [jessiescentre.org](http://jessiescentre.org)

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THE JUNE CALLWOOD CENTRE  
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