

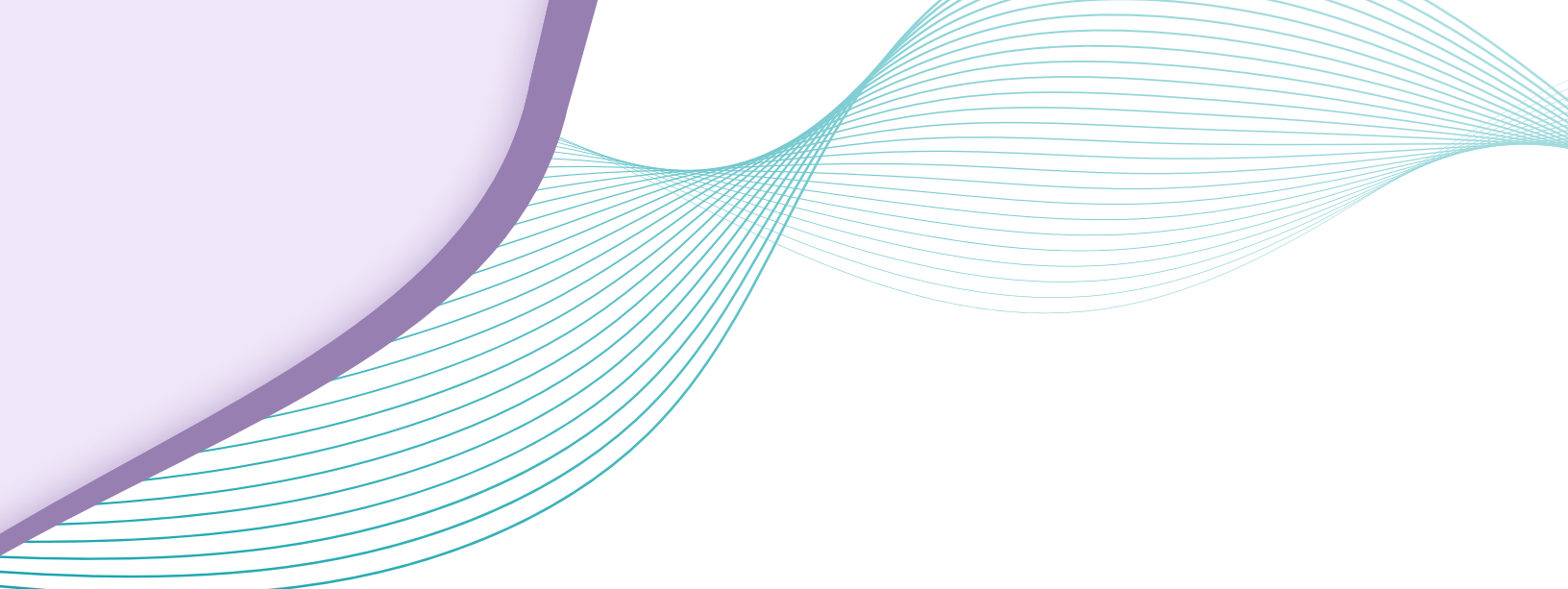
SAVIS

of Halton

Sexual Assault & Violence
Intervention Services

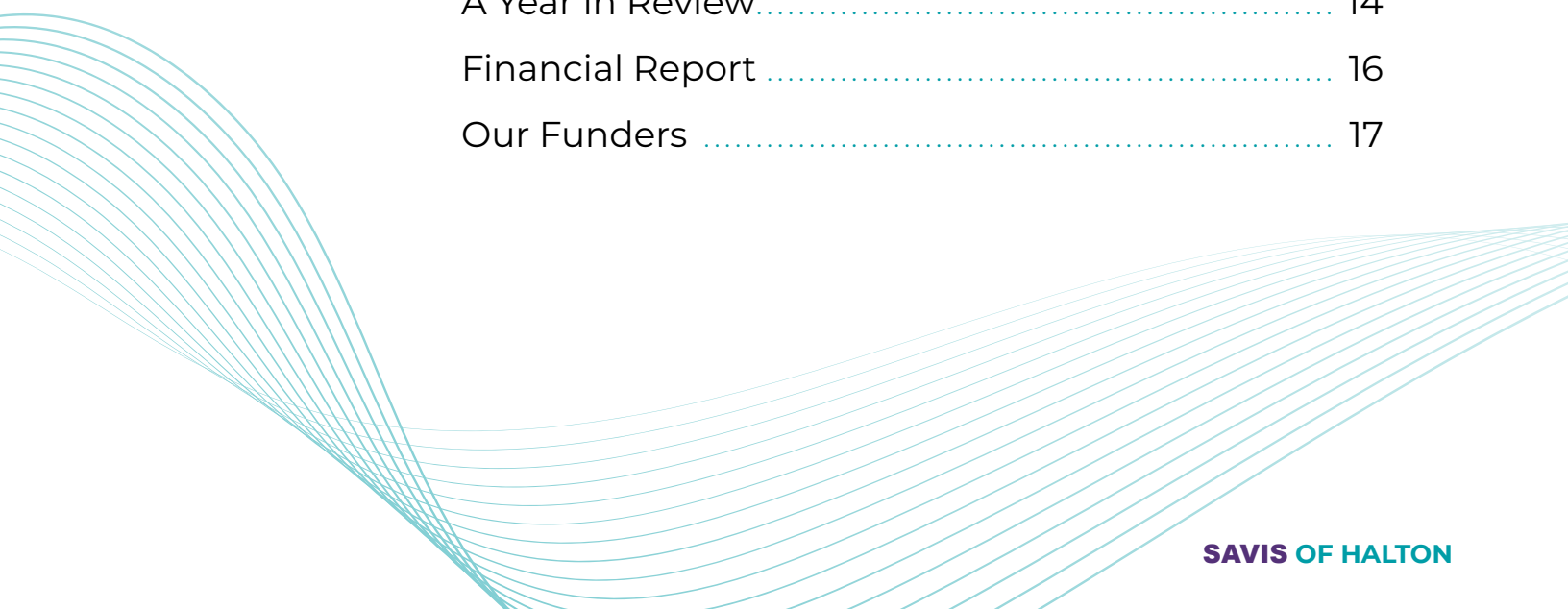
No Names
No Judgement
Just Support

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



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Mission

We foster a supportive environment for all survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking, including their families and caregivers. Through an intersectional, feminist, equitable, diverse, and inclusive lens, we offer a continuum of free trauma-informed specialized services.

Vision

We are dedicated to ending sexual violence and fostering a safe, supportive, just, and equitable society.

Values

ACCESSIBILITY

We offer a range of service delivery options to minimize barriers to access support services.

PERSON-CENTRED

We operate from a trauma-informed lens that fosters the autonomy and self-determination of survivors.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We maintain accountability through transparent and integral actions and acknowledge the positions of power that we hold as service providers.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Through an intersectional, feminist lens we recognize and seek to disrupt unequal power relations and uplift diverse voices through an anti-racist, anti-oppression framework.

COMMUNITY

As leaders in the anti-human trafficking and sexual violence space, we work collaboratively to provide preventative education and strengthen community partnerships to cultivate wrap-around supports.

ADVOCACY

Through a micro, meso, and macro lens, we amplify survivors' voices and facilitate their navigation of the system by bridging barriers to a continuum of support.

Board of **Directors**

Suzanne Stolz	Chair
Alexa Barkley	Vice-Chair
Michele Ghai	Treasurer
Gillian Wassmansdor	Secretary
Katie German	Member
Pam Uppal	Member
Smita Devane-Bhan	Member

Leadership Team



Silvia Samsa
Executive Director



Suresh Tharma
Manager, Finance



Shelagh Nuttall
Director of Development



Anna Morgan
Director of
Programs & Services

Chair's Report

Suzanne Stolz | Board Chair



As I write my final report as Chair of the Board of Directors for SAVIS of Halton, I find myself reflecting on both the challenges of the past year and the strength that continues to define SAVIS, the survivors we serve, and our community.

This year was not an easy one.

For survivors, the past year often felt heavy. Across Canada and beyond, high-profile cases dominated headlines, forcing difficult conversations into the public sphere. Survivors bravely shared their experiences and testified about the harm they endured, often under intense scrutiny. We watched familiar patterns unfold once again: victim-blaming, disbelief, the persistence of rape myths, and systems that too often appear to protect power rather than accountability.

For many survivors, these stories were not simply news headlines. They were reminders of their own experiences, fears, and barriers to healing. They underscored the difficult reality that speaking out can still come at a tremendous personal cost.

At times, it was difficult to focus on progress when these patterns seemed to repeat themselves. Yet despite these challenges, there are reasons for optimism.

Every day, survivors continue to reach out for support and take steps toward healing. SAVIS staff continue to meet them with compassion, expertise, and a steadfast commitment to survivor-centred care. Our volunteers, donors, and Board members remain deeply committed to creating a safer and more equitable community across Halton.

Over the past year, SAVIS continued to strengthen and expand its impact through counselling services, public education, community partnerships, anti-human trafficking initiatives, and survivor support programs. As demand for services continued to grow, the organization responded with professionalism, dedication, and an unwavering focus on the needs of survivors.

This year SAVIS also undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process. It was a dynamic and collaborative effort that engaged both staff and Board members in thoughtful conversations about the future of the organization and the evolving needs of survivors and our community. We look forward to implementing our new five-year strategic plan. Grounded in our values and equity commitments, the plan focuses on three key priorities: transforming systems through advocacy, leadership, and collaboration to improve outcomes for survivors; enhancing survivor-centred, holistic programs and services that support healing and recovery; and strengthening the organization itself by investing in our people, infrastructure, and capacity for innovation. Together, these priorities provide a strong roadmap for the future and position SAVIS to continue deepening its impact across Halton.

As I write this final report, I am also reflecting on the changes I have witnessed since first

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Chair's Report

...continued from Page 3

joining SAVIS. I joined the Board of Directors in 2019, and over the past seven years I have had the privilege of seeing the organization evolve and grow. Serving as Chair for the past three years has been a tremendous honour.

The mission of SAVIS is deeply personal to me, and while stepping away from the role of Chair is bittersweet, I do so with immense gratitude for the people who have made this experience so meaningful.

I am proud to have been able to see way SAVIS continues to centre survivors in its work while it has expanded its leadership in addressing sexual violence and human trafficking and reinforced its commitment to advocacy, education, and support. Even during challenging times, the organization has remained focused on building a future grounded in dignity, equity, justice, and healing. The completion of our strategic planning process reflects that commitment and provides a shared vision that will guide SAVIS as it strengthens its impact, deepens support for survivors, and continues to grow as an organization.

To the staff, volunteers, donors, community partners, fellow Board members, and supporters who make this work possible: thank you. Your commitment ensures that survivors have a place to turn, a voice to be heard, and a community that stands beside them.

And to the survivors who have entrusted SAVIS with their stories, healing, and hope: thank you. Your courage and resilience continue to shape this organization and remind us why this work matters.

While this year has reminded us how much work remains, it has also reinforced the importance of community, advocacy, and collective action. Progress is rarely linear, but every step forward matters. Together, we continue working toward a future where survivors are believed, supported, and empowered, and where sexual violence is no longer tolerated in our communities.

It has been an honour to serve SAVIS and to be part of this remarkable organization.

With gratitude,

Suzanne Stolz
Chair, Board of Directors
SAVIS of Halton

“We need a **societal shift** that moves us toward **believing survivors** and **understanding the realities of sexual violence.**”

Executive Director's Report

Silvia Samsa | Executive Director

As SAVIS marks 37 years of supporting survivors of sexual violence, we are reminded both of how far we have come and of the work that remains ahead. Over the past year, we have celebrated important successes while also witnessing the persistent challenges survivors continue to face within systems that too often fail them.

In July 2025, five members of Canada's World Junior hockey team were found not guilty of sexual assault. SAVIS was present in the courtroom that day. While we had prepared ourselves for the verdict, we were not prepared for the continued reliance on rape myths and misconceptions about sexual violence that were reflected in the judge's decision.

As advocates, we know that the vast majority of sexual assaults are never reported to police and therefore never enter the criminal justice system. High-profile cases such as this one can have a profound impact on survivors and reinforce the fears and doubts they have that already prevent them from coming forward.

We need a societal shift that moves us toward believing survivors and understanding the realities of sexual violence. This is at the heart of SAVIS's work every day. We believe survivors. We listen without judgment. We walk alongside them as they navigate systems and begin their journeys toward healing.

Our work has an impact throughout the Halton region. Our public educators work with people across a broad spectrum of settings, including schools, community organizations, correctional services, mental health agencies, food banks, and other non-profit organizations. Through our awareness and engagement events, we bring parents, students, and community members together to talk openly about healthy relationships and consent.

Our 24/7 crisis line receives thousands of calls each year. Our dedicated volunteers are often the first point of contact for survivors reaching out for support. For many, making that first call can be an incredibly difficult step. Our volunteers are there to listen, provide information, and connect survivors with the support they need. As our mission states: no names, no judgment.

Our counselling program continues to provide much needed support in person, virtually, and by telephone. This year, we have made significant progress in reducing our counselling waitlist by expanding our group programming, which provides survivors with immediate access to support, and through having a staff member located with one of our partner agencies in Milton. These expanded supports and partnerships allow us to meet survivors where they are and strengthen access to services across Halton.

Our anti-human trafficking program continues to support survivors of both human and labour trafficking. SAVIS remains the only agency in Halton providing comprehensive support specifically to survivors of labour trafficking. This work is complex, and we are proud to stand alongside survivors as they rebuild their lives.

This year, we also said goodbye to a valued leader on our Board of Directors. Suzanne Stolz has served on the SAVIS Board for several years, including two years as Chair. Her steadfast and fierce leadership has strengthened our organization and helped keep survivors at the center of our decisions. We are deeply grateful for her commitment and recognize Suzanne leaves a meaningful legacy at SAVIS. She will be greatly missed.

None of this work happens alone. We are incredibly grateful to our partner agencies, whose collaboration and wisdom make our work possible. We also thank our donors, funders, volunteers, Board members, and staff, whose dedication and passion ensure that SAVIS can continue to be there for survivors when they need us most.

Together, we are working to make survivors' voices louder - loud enough to challenge the systems that create barriers and loud enough to challenge harmful sexual violence myths. When those barriers continue to stand in the way of survivors, we will continue to work to demand change and knock them down.

Finally, I want to thank the survivors who place their faith and trust in SAVIS. We do this work because we believe you and we will continue to stand with you!



Anti-Human Trafficking Program

The Anti-Human Trafficking Program experienced another year of growth, partnership building, and increasing recognition as a specialized leader in supporting survivors of both sex trafficking and labour trafficking across Halton. Throughout the year, the program experienced continued growth in both self-referrals and referrals from community partners demonstrating the important role SAVIS plays as a trusted community resource for human trafficking survivors seeking specialized and trauma-informed support.

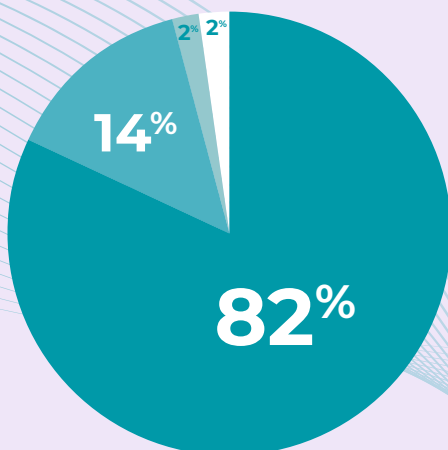
One of the most significant developments this year was the increasing prevalence of labour trafficking within Halton. Staff participated in a major labour trafficking investigation and provided immediate emotional support to survivors during police operations while helping individuals understand their rights and connect with counselling, housing, immigration, financial assistance, and other essential services. Follow-up case management ensured survivors continued receiving coordinated support well beyond the initial intervention.

Community partnerships remained central to program success. SAVIS renewed its partnership with Churchill Neighbourhood Services, continuing regular outreach and support for survivors within the community. The program also expanded services at Vanier Centre by offering monthly education sessions alongside opportunities for individual case management for survivors who may not otherwise access services.

Public awareness and prevention continued alongside direct service delivery. The Anti-Human Trafficking team collaborated on community awareness events, school presentations, and professional education sessions reaching hundreds of students, educators, and community members. Survivor voices remained central to this work and helped participants understand both the realities of trafficking and the importance of trauma-informed responses.

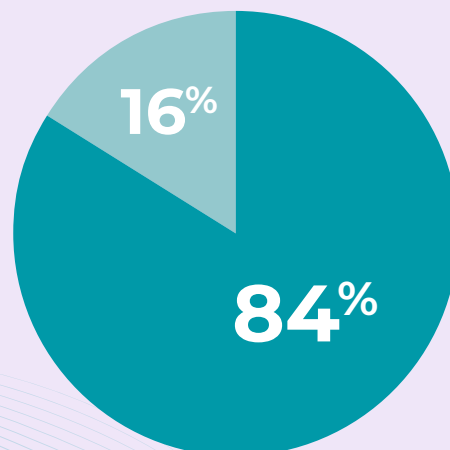
Type of Trafficking

- Sex Trafficking
- Labour Trafficking
- At Risk
- Other



Trafficking by Age Group

- 25 Years & Older
- Up to 24 Years



SAVIS also continued its coordination of the Halton Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (HCAHT). This year, the collaborative focused on strengthening its governance structure and improving coordinated responses for survivors through enhanced referral pathways and shared planning.

A particular focus this year was ensuring that survivor engagement remains ethical and respectful. Members of the collaborative participated in training on Ethical Storytelling led by lived experience experts, which reinforced practices that honour survivors and ensure their voices are shared safely and meaningfully compensated. The collaborative also continued embedding a decolonizing lens into its governance work through its partnership with Grandmother's Voice, which strengthened accountability and ensured ongoing community relationships were reflected throughout the network's work.

Looking forward, the Anti-Human Trafficking Program will continue expanding its expertise in labour trafficking and strengthening a coordinated community response. SAVIS aims to increase outreach to underserved populations and ensure survivors have access to comprehensive and trauma-informed support regardless of how they enter the service system.

Across all program areas, the dedication of SAVIS staff, volunteers, community partners, and survivors continues to shape services that are both responsive and innovative.

Testimonial

“Mona, you go above and beyond with your work - not just because that is the expectation of the job, and you have been so incredibly resourceful, determined and compassionate. What's particularly comforting is that you always help with difficult situations with full empathy and zero judgment. Your dedication and the missions, visions and values that guide you from SAVIS represent powerful reminders that sometimes one person, one organization is all you need to move forward and heal.”

- Survivor

Counselling

The Counselling Program continued to evolve to meet the growing need and increasingly complex barriers that survivors experience. The program remained committed to providing trauma-informed and survivor-centered services by expanded programming and strengthening program policies.

Throughout the year, significant work was undertaken to review and update counselling policies and procedures. These revisions focused on improving access for survivors by addressing counselling wait times while still maintaining the high standards of trauma-informed support.

One of the most meaningful developments this year was the expansion of group programming. SAVIS continued the Art Therapy Group in the Spring of 2025, and participants described the experience as one where they felt accepted, safe, understood, and able to express themselves in ways that traditional talk therapy does not always allow. Survivors shared that the group reduced feelings of isolation, fostered belonging, and reminded them that healing is possible. These powerful reflections reinforced the importance of creative and experiential approaches to trauma healing.

Building on this success, the counselling team introduced ongoing psychoeducational groups offered twice monthly. Topics included understanding trauma, boundaries, coping strategies, grief, mindfulness, triggers, and rebuilding self-worth. These groups consistently operated at full capacity throughout the year, and participant feedback highlighted the welcoming and respectful environment, knowledgeable facilitators, meaningful peer connections, and practical skills that could be applied in their daily lives.

The program also introduced its first Peer-to-Peer Social Group, recognizing that healing often occurs when survivors can connect with other survivors in a relaxed and supportive environment.

SAVIS remains committed to improving service access. Through funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, SAVIS was able to add a System Navigation and Outreach position. This new role focused on strengthening coordinated access to services while increasing community awareness of sexual violence and human trafficking supports.

As we look ahead, the Counselling remains focused on expanding access and strengthening group programming to ensure survivors' needs are continuously met.

Testimonials

Elyssa, Thank you so much for your email and for all the resources. It is hard to believe I will never see you again, yet everything must come to some completion in life, I suppose.

I am more than grateful the universe put us together for these last 7+ months. What a wonderful connection! Thank you.

- Survivor

“These **powerful reflections** reinforced the importance of **creative** and **experiential** approaches to trauma healing”



Public Education

Public education remained one of SAVIS of Halton's fastest-growing areas of service this year. Demand for presentations, workshops, and professional training continued to increase across schools, community organizations, and workplaces, which demonstrated a growing recognition that prevention and education are essential components of ending gender-based violence.

The Public Education team delivered education on a broad range of topics including consent, healthy relationships, sexual violence prevention, bystander intervention, bullying, online safety, and anti-human trafficking. The program continued to receive positive word-of-mouth that resulted in new schools and organizations requesting presentations, which reflected the strong reputation the team has built for engaging and evidence-informed education.

While school-based programming continued to be a cornerstone of our prevention work, community outreach expanded considerably as the team intentionally engaged with more diverse audiences. New partnerships were developed to reach populations that may experience additional barriers to accessing services, including newcomers, unhoused individuals, and marginalized communities.

Professional education expanded significantly this year. Public Educators delivered training to educators, food bank staff and volunteers, multicultural organizations, library leadership, and other frontline professionals. It included specialized sessions that were tailored to the realities of each sector, and equipped participants with practical tools to recognize gender-based violence, respond to disclosures in trauma-informed ways, and connect survivors to appropriate resources.

A major milestone this year was SAVIS' collaboration in supporting an education initiative alongside Victim Services, Nina's Place, the Women's Centre of Halton, and other partners. SAVIS supported the six-part professional development series Sexual Violence: Recognize, Respond, Refer. The series equipped professionals who do not receive formal training on disclosures with the knowledge and confidence to respond appropriately when someone discloses sexual violence.

SAVIS continued to play a leadership role in regional collaboration by convening Public Educators across Halton to establish a community of practice focused on professional development, survivor engagement, and identifying collective strategies to address emerging issues, including digital safety, engaging men and boys, and supporting older adults experiencing gender-based violence.

As public education continues to grow, SAVIS remains committed to providing accessible, survivor-informed programming that strengthens communities and contributes to long-term systems change.



Testimonials

SAVIS provided thoughtful and impactful training to Milton Public Library staff, helping our team better understand an issue that is affecting communities across Ontario, including our own. The session increased awareness, equipped staff with valuable knowledge, and helped us better understand how to recognize and respond to situations that may affect our patrons. As a public service organization, it is important that we all play a role in being informed and creating safe, supportive spaces for those who may need assistance. SAVIS delivered the training with professionalism, empathy, and expertise, leaving our team better prepared to support and connect community members with appropriate resources.

– Milton Public Library

Working with the SAVIS team has been a highlight for our school community, leaving a lasting mark on students and staff alike. Kyle brings such an extraordinary warmth, empathy, and genuine care to every session, making even the most sensitive conversations feel safe, open, and deeply meaningful. We highly recommend

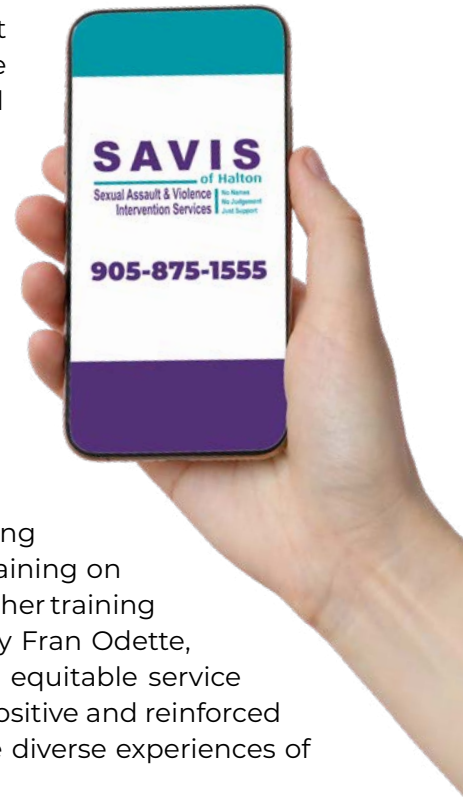
SAVIS to any school community looking to make a real, positive difference for their students.

The demand for crisis support remained high throughout the year. The Crisis Line experienced an increase in callers in the Spring/Summer of 2025, which reflected broader trends observed across Ontario sexual assault centers following high profile sexual assault cases and heightened public attention on sexual violence in the media. In response, SAVIS continued its ongoing recruitment and orientation of crisis line volunteers to ensure that survivors could access timely and compassionate support when they reached out.

SAVIS also continued to invest in continuous learning opportunities for volunteers. SAVIS volunteers attended a training on the Sexual Assault Investigation Guide by Victim Services. Another training highlight of this year was the Disability Justice training led by Fran Odette, which strengthened the team's understanding of access and equitable service delivery. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive and reinforced our commitment to creating services that are responsive to the diverse experiences of survivors.

The Crisis Line will continue to focus on volunteer training, development and recognition in the coming year. One focus of the training will be the development and delivery of advanced modules for experienced volunteers on providing trauma-informed accompaniments to survivors accessing medical and legal services. SAVIS recognizes that volunteers are the backbone of the crisis line and is committed to providing ongoing professional development and information on current best practices. This commitment ensures that every volunteer is prepared to provide informed and high quality support to survivors and their families.

Crisis Line



Volunteer Program

Making a Difference in Our Community

Our volunteers are at the heart of SAVIS of Halton. They generously share their time, knowledge, compassion, and talents to strengthen our programs, support our events, and help advance our mission of ending gender-based violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking.

Whether serving on our Board of Directors, supporting fundraising initiatives, assisting with community outreach, or lending their expertise behind the scenes, every volunteer plays a vital role in creating a safer, more informed, and more compassionate community.

Their commitment allows us to reach more survivors, educate more community members, and continue providing trauma-informed services that make a lasting difference. We are deeply grateful for every individual who chooses to stand alongside us in this important work.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Diana Tello



Since joining SAVIS of Halton in October 2024, Diana has made an exceptional impact through her reliability, initiative, and commitment to supporting survivors.

Whether volunteering at community events, responding to accompaniment requests, or taking on additional projects like organizing a notebook drive for SAVIS, Diana consistently steps forward with enthusiasm and compassion. She is a dependable team member who approaches every opportunity with professionalism, empathy, and a willingness to help wherever she is needed. Diana excels at communicating with callers in crisis and collaborating with staff and fellow volunteers, demonstrating kindness, patience, and genuine care in every interaction.

Diana's dedication, positive attitude, and commitment to our mission have made her an invaluable member of our volunteer team. We are proud to recognize her as SAVIS of Halton's Volunteer of the Year. Thank you, Diana!

“Everyone needs to be **valued**. Everyone has the **potential** to **give something** back.”

– Princess Diana



5,123
Volunteer
Hours



Distinguished Volunteer Service Award

*Celebrating **Suzanne Stoltz***

After more than a decade of extraordinary service, we extend our deepest gratitude to Suzanne Stoltz as she concludes her volunteer leadership with SAVIS of Halton.

Suzanne's relationship with SAVIS began more than ten years ago as a dedicated volunteer, where she generously shared her expertise in communications and marketing while actively supporting fundraising initiatives and community events. Her commitment, professionalism, and passion for the organization's mission quickly made her a valued member of the SAVIS community.

Prior to joining the Board of Directors, Suzanne served as Chair of the planning committee for the annual International Women's Day Dinner Party fundraiser, helping strengthen community partnerships and raise critical funds to support survivors of sexual violence and human trafficking.

Over the past five years, Suzanne has served with distinction on the Board of Directors, including two years as Board Chair. During her tenure, she provided thoughtful leadership, strong governance, and strategic guidance through a period of continued growth and evolving community needs. Her calm leadership, collaborative approach, and unwavering focus on survivor-centered care helped strengthen the organization and position of SAVIS for the future.

Throughout her career, Suzanne has been a tireless advocate for justice and human rights. Her extensive background in human rights litigation, women's rights advocacy, family law, and constitutional law has informed her work both professionally and as a volunteer. Her experience with organizations dedicated to advancing equality and justice has brought an invaluable perspective to the Board and reinforced SAVIS's commitment to advocacy and systemic change.

Beyond her impressive credentials, Suzanne has led with compassion, integrity, and genuine care for the people and communities served by SAVIS. She has consistently championed the voices of survivors while supporting staff, volunteers, and fellow Board members with generosity, wisdom, and respect.

Suzanne's contributions have left a lasting mark on SAVIS of Halton. Her leadership has strengthened our governance, expanded our impact, and helped ensure that survivors continue to receive the compassionate, trauma-informed support they deserve.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, donors, and the countless individuals whose lives have been touched by SAVIS, we offer our heartfelt thanks to Suzanne for her years of dedicated service. We wish her every success and happiness in the next chapter of her journey and know that the legacy of her leadership will continue to inspire our work for years to come.

A Year in Review





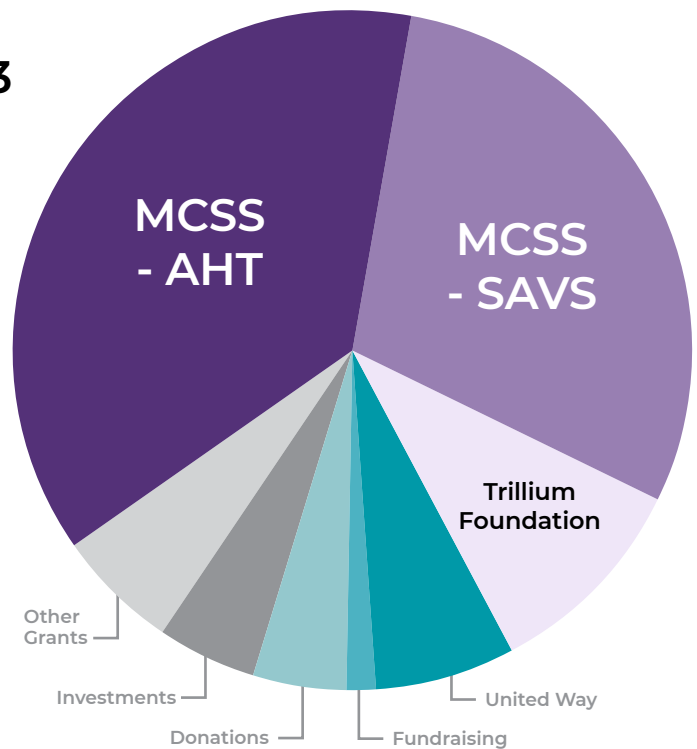
We would like to thank all our funders, donors and community partners for their support, understanding and generosity.

We simply couldn't do what we do without amazing people like you.

Financial Report

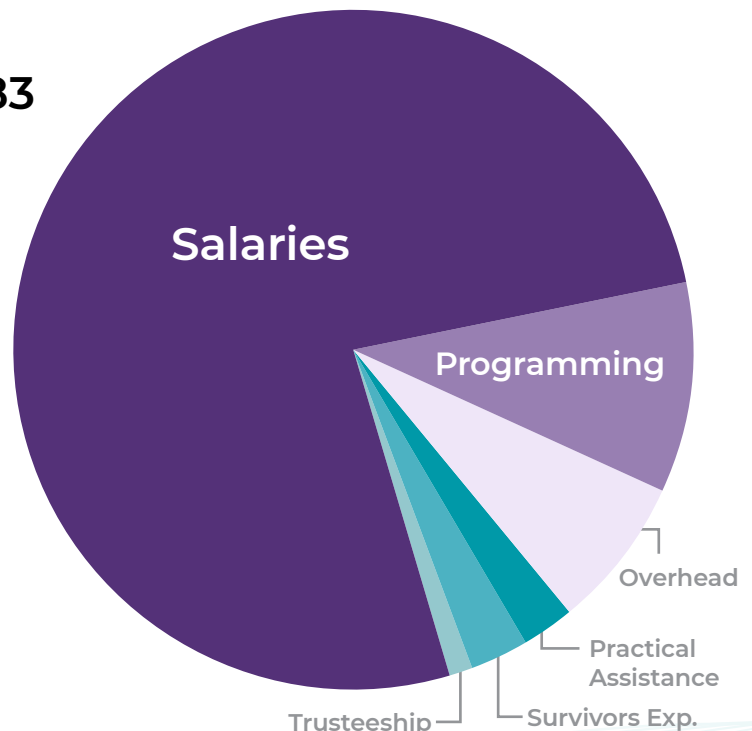
2025-2026 Revenue: \$1,573,333

● MCSS - AHT	\$590,473
● MCSS - SAVS.....	\$466,109
● Trillium Foundation	\$154,835
● United Way.....	\$106,000
● Fundraising.....	\$21,826
● Donations.....	\$71,401
● Investments.....	\$73,068
● Other Grants.....	\$89,621



2025-2026 Expenses: \$1,787,383

● Salaries	\$1,159,407
● Programming.....	\$188,854
● Overhead	\$144,260
● Practical Assistance	\$68,252
● Survivors Exp.....	\$144,260
● Trusteeship.....	\$68,252



SAVIS is primarily funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

Our Funders

SAVIS of Halton extends our deepest gratitude for your generous support of survivors of gender-based violence. Your commitment is instrumental in helping us continue our mission and uphold our vision of a safer, more equitable community for all.



Ministry of
Children, Community &
Social Services



United Way
Golden Horseshoe



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA



MEDAVIE



BURLINGTON
FOUNDATION



Halton Shoebox Project
Purse Project Network
Purses With a Purpose

**Acton District School Student
Leadership Group**
**The Burlington Welsh Ladies
Chorus(BWLC)**



SAVIS

of Halton
Sexual Assault & Violence
Intervention Services

No Names
No Judgement
Just Support

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