



A Season of Growth –

REFLECTING ON SUMMER

An Overview

As we head into the fall, we would like to take an opportunity to look back on this past summer, which was significant for our growth and impact in Ottawa. Over the past few months, OVS has expanded its reach and introduced new ways of supporting survivors of crime and tragedy all while our team of crisis-trained staff and volunteers have dedicated countless hours to ensuring that those who face trauma, violence, danger, or loss are never alone. Through the support of our funders, donors, community partners, and the Ottawa community itself, we have been able to achieve important milestones and continue strengthening our responses to survivors. As always, our commitment is to meet survivors where they are, provide immediate and compassionate support, respond with cultural humility, and advocate for systemic change that ensures long-term safety and healing for all.



"From the beginning, OVS staff provided compassionate and thoughtful assistance during a very difficult time. When this staff member went on leave, another seamlessly took over and continued offering the same level of care and dedication. In the absence of close family or friends, their support made a significant difference in helping me navigate my circumstances. Words cannot fully express my gratitude, but I want to formally acknowledge their professionalism, empathy, and the meaningful impact they've had on my well-being. They are a credit to your organization and the important work OVS does".

– FROM AN OVS CLIENT AND SURVIVOR



A Message from the Executive Director



At OVS, everything we do is informed by our commitment to the wellbeing of survivors, and this summer demonstrated that commitment. Survivors usually reach us during their most vulnerable moments, and it is our privilege to walk beside them as they begin

to rebuild their lives. The dedication of our staff and volunteers ensures that support is always available, and this summer demonstrated how important their role is in our community.

Although daily events in our network of providers with similar mandates are limited during the summer holidays, our volunteers and staff remain active 24/7 to respond to survivors in need. This dedication was shown in the many activities and events that took place over the past few months. I was proud to deliver a presentation at the United for All Coalition meeting, hosted by United Way Eastern Ontario, where I shared details about our Online Hate Crime Reporting Tool, how it works, its impact, and how OVS responds with

trauma-informed support to those impacted. We also stood alongside Tyson Ndongezi's family and community partners on July 5th for Tyson's Birthday, honouring his memory through sports, youth activities, conversations, and art, with proceeds benefiting the Tyson Dream Foundation in its fight against gun violence. On the National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism, OVS visited the Air India Flight 182 Memorial Garden at Commissioner's Park and encouraged the community to visit as well.

We are also very proud to announce the launch and continuation of two major projects at OVS. With generous funding from the Ottawa Community Foundation, our monthly Walk-In Counselling Clinic is now up and running and offers survivors same-day access to professional, trauma-informed care on the first Wednesday of every month. At the same time, we are preparing to integrate Red Flag Laws into our See It, Name It, Change It campaign, with generous funding from Public Safety Canada. While the walk-in clinic is already serving our community, the Red Flag initiative will roll out in the months ahead, and both projects are outlined in more detail throughout this newsletter.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Renewed Computer Technology of Ontario for donating 35 cell phones for survivors to ensure that more individuals can reach help in times of need, especially in cases on Intimate Partner Violence which have been declared an epidemic in our city. Our team was also proud to participate in the Carleton University School of Social Work Agency Fair, where we showcased our programs and services, including our new Walk-In Counselling Clinic. On a provincial level, I joined directors from across Ontario at the Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers in Kingston where we strengthened our collaboration across the province in our shared mandate. To close the summer, we welcomed one of our largest groups of new volunteers to date, 20 individuals, trained by our amazing VCARS Coordinator.

These, along with our ongoing staff and volunteer-driven crisis response and outreach, are made possible through the trust of survivors and the generosity of our community. If you are able, we invite you to consider making a one-time or monthly donation as an OVS Changemaker. Your support helps us stay available 24/7 for survivors in our community impacted by crime and tragedy. Every dollar donated goes towards continuing and expanding on our programs and services.

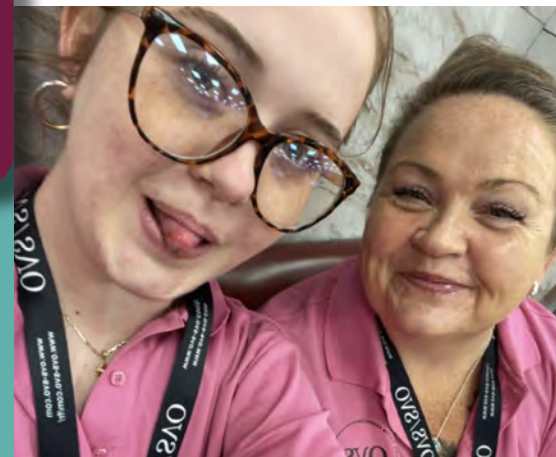
On behalf of the entire team at OVS, we thank you for your continued support!

Warm regards,

Heidi Illingworth, OVS Executive Director

Volunteer with OVS to Support Survivors

You can make a significant impact for survivors when they need it most by Volunteering with OVS. Our crisis-trained volunteers are at the heart of our organization and provide essential support 24/7 to individuals navigating the aftermath of a crime or tragic circumstance.



"I have been a volunteer with Ottawa Victim Services for almost five years now. This experience has helped me not only be in touch with people in the community but all the wonderful community partners that help victims everyday. I have learned so much through a multitude of training that OVS has provided. Whether it is providing basic needs to someone being sheltered to Court accompaniment, every experience with a client provides an opportunity to help someone who really needs compassionate and practical support. The staff at OVS are such dedicated individuals who work very hard to provide excellent services. They are also very supportive of their volunteers. If you enjoy helping others, supporting victims of violence or a crime, this volunteer work is for you! "

– FROM AN OVS VOLUNTEER

Interested in becoming a crisis-trained volunteer with OVS?
Learn more and apply at www.ovs-svo.com/volunteer/



Summer Highlights



Launch of Walk-In Counselling Clinic

One of the most exciting developments of this summer was the launch of our brand-new monthly Walk-In Counselling Clinic, which is designed to provide survivors with timely access to mental health support. As the clinic launched in the summer, 6 sessions will continue to be available on the first Wednesday of every month, on a first come first served basis, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and offers immediate access to counselling without the need for an appointment. Sessions are held at the OVS location and are provided by a social worker on the OVS team using trauma-informed and evidence-based interventions. This program was created in response to the significant need for survivors to have a safe space where they can connect with professional counsellors without facing long waitlists or barriers to entry. Survivors who attend can expect compassionate support no matter the circumstances, as well as safety planning and referrals to additional services where needed. While this initiative prioritizes survivors of gender-based violence such as sexual violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, and human trafficking, our doors are open to all survivors in need of support. We are incredibly grateful to the Ottawa Community Foundation for funding this important initiative, which represents a major step forward in reducing barriers to care and ensuring that survivors in our community are met with the timely support they deserve.



Continuing Our Collaboration with Overbrook Bingo Palace

Our partnership with the Overbrook Bingo Palace continues to be a significant source of support for OVS. As an official charitable gaming partner, this collaboration provides us with more than \$1,500 each month, funding that directly supports our crisis-trained volunteer program. The dedication of our Bingo volunteers who give their time to participate at the Bingo sessions has been so crucial in sustaining our ability to provide 24/7 support to survivors. We are sincerely grateful for this ongoing partnership and the community members who contribute to our mission through their involvement in charitable gaming. It is thanks to their commitment that we can continue to grow and sustain the essential services we provide.



Strengthening Our Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention Campaign

This summer also brought us news that OVS has received funding from Public Safety Canada in collaboration with Lanark County Interval House & Community Support (LCIHCS) and Algonquin College at the Victimology Research Centre to expand and strengthen our See It, Name It, Change It campaign. Originally launched in response to Ottawa's declaration of IPV as an epidemic based on LCIHCS' rural campaign of the same name, this campaign raises awareness about the warning signs of IPV and

provides tools and tip sheets for individuals, the community, and teachers for safe intervention and prevention from an urban lens. With the support of Public Safety Canada, we will now be integrating Red Flag Laws into this initiative, which provide guidance for concerned individuals to take action when someone may be at risk of serious harm.

Red flag laws in Canada give courts the power to act quickly when someone is believed to pose a danger to themselves or others, including in situations involving IPV. They work through two main tools: the emergency prohibition order and the emergency limitations on access order. An emergency prohibition order allows a judge to temporarily remove firearms, licences, and registration certificates from a person who poses a risk, usually for up to 30 days, with the option of extending it if the danger continues. An emergency limitation on access order does not remove the firearms but restricts the person's ability to access them, for example by requiring that they be stored with someone else. Because the presence of a firearm can make abusive situations far more dangerous, these measures can

create a safe option for survivors, family members, community members, or professionals to raise concerns and take action before harm occurs. In this, OVS is working to make sure survivors are not only supported after violence happens but are also protected before it can escalate. This funding allows us to expand our current campaign's reach and provide more community members, educators, professionals, and individuals (including survivors) with the knowledge they need to act safely. We thank Public Safety Canada for their generous support!



Public Safety
Canada

Program and Service Highlights & Updates

Our core services such as crisis intervention, safety planning, practical support, and advocacy remain at the heart of what we do, with our dedicated team of staff and volunteers working hard to ensure that no one facing hardship is left without support. OVS remains dedicated to creating a safer and more supportive environment for everyone. Keep an eye on our social media platforms for more updates!

At OVS, our programs and services are designed to meet survivors where they are and provide comprehensive, trauma-informed support in times of crisis. We offer 24/7 crisis intervention, safety planning, emotional support, advocacy, and referrals to community resources, ensuring that no one has to face violence, loss, or tragedy alone. Our trained staff and volunteers provide immediate assistance while also helping survivors navigate longer-term recovery through services such as the Walk-In Counselling Clinic, ongoing outreach, and specialized prevention initiatives like the See It, Name It, Change It campaign. Each program is based on compassion, accessibility, equality, and collaboration, reflecting our commitment to creating a safer and more supportive Ottawa for everyone.



Looking Ahead at OVS

As we move into the fall, OVS remains dedicated to responding to survivors in crisis while also working to raise awareness on violence prevention before it occurs. With new programs now underway and additional funding supporting our existing initiatives, we look very forward to the months ahead and the positive impact we can continue to create in our Ottawa community. Stay connected with OVS through our website and social media platforms to keep up with the latest updates, resources, photos of our team in the community, and opportunities to get involved. Thank you for standing with us and for recognizing the importance of supporting survivors and letting them know that they do not have to face the aftermath of tragedy alone.

Ask for Angela: Continuing to Provide Safe Spaces

Loblaws-affiliated stores, provides survivors with a discreet and safe way to seek help if they are feeling in danger in situations such as intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual assault, or

Our participation in the Ask for Angela initiative continues to be an important part of our prevention and safety efforts across Ottawa. This initiative, launched in collaboration with

human trafficking. By asking for “Angela” at Loblaws-affiliated locations, survivors are connected with trained staff who can take them to a safe space and assist in contacting OVS for support.

OVS is honoured to play a significant role in making sure these supports are available, and we remain committed to expanding the awareness and reach of this initiative to remind survivors that they have a safe way of seeking help.

Have you noticed these signs?

If you have not received training on this initiative,
please speak with your leader.



NOFRILLS



If you feel unsafe, come inside and
ask for Angela
or call Ottawa Victim Services (OVS) at 613-238-2762

This phrase will indicate to our
team that you require immediate help.

**SHOPPERS
DRUG MART**



If you feel unsafe, come inside and
ask for Angela

or call Ottawa Victim Services (OVS)
at 613-238-2762

This phrase will indicate to our team that you require
immediate help.

Independent



If you feel unsafe, come inside and
ask for Angela

or call Ottawa Victim Services (OVS)
at 613-238-2762

This phrase will indicate to our team
that you require immediate help.

Loblaw Companies Limited



Support OVS: Opportunities for Giving

As we reflect on the successes of this summer, we also recognize that our work is made possible only through the generosity of those who support us in our important mandate. Every donation to OVS directly funds programs and services that provide survivors with safety, advocacy, stability, and guidance.

Because our donor platform Zeffy relies only on optional contributions from donors rather than fees, 100% of every gift goes directly to helping survivors. Even if it is a one-time contribution or you choose to give monthly, every dollar counts in supporting those who need it most 24/7. These donations help us fund our crisis intervention, expand new projects such as our Walk-In Counselling Clinic, respond to hate through our Online Hate Crime Reporting Tool, and strengthen community-wide prevention initiatives such as our See It, Name It, Change It campaign. To make a donation today, visit www.ovs-svo.com/give-today!

Become an OVS Changemaker by Giving Monthly

Become an OVS Changemaker and select a tier of your choice to contribute year-round as an OVS Changemaker.

Supporter

\$20/month

Covers mileage to dispatch our 24/7 crisis support volunteers.

Advocate

\$130/month

Provides survivors with safety devices, lock changes, or onboarding 15 new volunteers every quarter.

Ambassador

\$50/month

Covers volunteer expenses such as parking, meal vouchers, or 2 Uber rides to safety for survivors.

Ally

Custom Amount

A custom amount can help provide groceries and basic needs for survivors after fleeing violence.





Our mission

To support survivors of crime or tragedy. To provide the resources, guidance, help and referrals for survivors to get back to living their lives. To help people protect themselves and stand up for their rights.

Our vision

We aim to create a stronger, safer, and kinder community for all.

Our values

COMMUNITY DRIVEN

We know that strength lies in teamwork, and that supporting our community means working as a community. OVS is part of a network of local services and organizations that work together to support our Ottawa community.

COMPASSION

We do what we do because we care. Our team builds relationships with people and partners based on respect, trust, and openness. We listen carefully, guide gently, and never judge. We aim to create a welcoming space where everyone is heard and helped.

INCLUSIVENESS

Our services are freely available to people of every:

Race • Ethnicity • Religion or belief • Sex • Gender • Sexual orientation • Age • Disability • Marriage & civil partnership • Pregnancy and maternity

We work hard to understand and consider the different cultural backgrounds of the people we serve. We prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion in the way we work, from how we deliver our services to how we hire people.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

We're here to help you, not control or judge you. We'll listen to what you're struggling with and what you need.

We'll help you understand your options. Finally, we'll support you with what you choose to do. We are here to help, not control or judge our clients. We listen to their needs and struggles. We help them understand their options. Finally, we support our clients with what they choose to do.

We value independence and privacy. We work in partnership with the police, but we are not the police.