

Barbra Schlifer 
Commemorative Clinic
Freedom From Violence.



United Way
Toronto & York Region

Annual Report to the Community



2016
2017



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Amanda Dale, Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Afshan Ali, President of the Board

Message from the Executive Director and the President

This past year the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic has made great strides assisting women to find resolution and stability in the aftermath of violence.

Stability is recognized in many ways. For thousands of women who cross our threshold each year, stability is at first a fragile hope, nurtured by a compassionate reception, a mutual assessment of their ongoing safety, and later, through consistent access to counselling, legal and language interpretation services. Only then, in a safe and non-judgmental environment, can hope turn into action, as women begin to resolve their experiences of violence.

For the Clinic, stability takes an additional form. We are Canada's only fully integrated legal, counselling and language interpretation clinic for women who have experienced violence. We have been a valued resource for women, funders and policy makers alike for 32 years. Yet, our funding is neither adequate to the demand for our services, nor does it fully support our basic operational needs. Stability for the Clinic, like stability for the women who seek our help, is a fragile thing. It is also a matter we have turned our attention to in the last year of planning. Our perseverance stems from our commitment to meet the rising demand for services. But for us to meet this demand, we require the commitment of the community, donors, funders, volunteers and supporters—all insisting that the Barbra Schlifer Clinic not be allowed to falter in destabilizing conditions.

Throughout 2016, the Clinic provided stability to more than **4,700** women by:

- Offering trauma-informed individual and group counselling services to 1,126 women.
- Connecting women with practical supports in the community, like housing, so women can leave an abusive relationship.
- Being the only community-based site that offers Independent Legal Advice to women survivors of sexual assault.
- Ensuring the availability of interpretation to 1,776 refugee and immigrant women so that their experiences of violence were accurately understood.
- Equipping 13 immigrant and refugee women with the skills, certification, and confidence to become professional language interpreters through our training program.
- Successfully having our submissions reflected in the recommendation to remove the Honorable Justice Camp from the bench.
- Actively participating in test cases at appellate and Supreme Court levels.
- Helping to shape the legal reforms that the Provincial Roundtable on Violence Against Women and the federal strategy for Gender-Based Violence have produced.
- Making submissions to the United Nations in support of recommendations to address and prevent gender-based violence.
- Being a voice of reason and clarity in media and public debates concerning sexual assault.

Achieving stability is a process that takes time, perseverance and stamina. Even upon achieving stability, it is never guaranteed to last.

Featured throughout this report are some of the people who make up the Schlifer Clinic. All reflect on the meaning of stability to them personally, to the women who come to us, and to the Clinic itself, as a resource, a source of hope and healing, and as a beacon for law reform. From survivors of sexual assault who took on the justice system through their experiences of violence and on whose behalf the Clinic intervened in public interest, to veteran Clinic employees and a new Director of Legal Services, to a former Board Chair, and an incoming Board Chair and donor—all remind us that stability requires a sustaining act of love for your own values.

We invite you to read and reflect on their thoughts. We also invite you to share your own and tell us why you choose to support the Clinic.

Thank you for playing a significant role in the Clinic's longevity. It is because of you that we can amplify women's voices and cultivate their skills and resilience, introducing into their lives a sense of stability they had not thought possible.

Help us make sure we are here as long as we are needed.

In 2016 the Clinic saw an **increase of 24 percent** in the number of women seeking legal, counselling and interpretation assistance

I am an immigrant woman who has strong beliefs in the rights of individuals, equality, and safety. As a black woman, I have experienced discrimination and have been made to feel insecure and unsafe.

Twenty-eight years ago I joined the Clinic as its receptionist. Today, as the Clinic's Director of Administration and Resource Development and with the stability afforded to me, I am in a position to help to create an environment that responds compassionately to women in crisis while recognizing in them their individual strengths, courage, resilience, and right to safety and equality.



Stability means that to the best of my ability I act responsibly for anything or anyone entrusted into my care. It means that I am dependable in my duties, have the courage to stand up for my beliefs, and am stable enough in my life to create a happy environment for my loved ones.

MELDINA

Finances

This statement of operations is an excerpt extracted from the audited statement

	2017	2016
Revenue	\$ 3,736,896	\$ 3,648,329
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	2,328,528	2,212,040
Interpreters fees and training	495,920	497,680
Building occupancy	256,221	248,016
Purchased services	189,219	92,221
Insurance	29,957	29,268
Special events	44,677	43,252
Client disbursements	26,800	41,183
Promotion and publicity	17,480	15,210
Printing, postage, delivery	30,331	24,870
Telecommunications	75,199	63,777
Equipment, furniture, software	49,773	25,132
Travel	29,041	56,231
Volunteer expenses	6,342	6,701
Office and general	40,746	33,167
Program expenses	77,562	169,716
Renovations	-	48,280
Professional development	20,697	9,185
Membership fees, legal and other	18,075	15,229
	3,736,568	3,631,158
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	328	17,171

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic Charitable Number 1 1879 9162 RR0001

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CUPE-SCFP



SHAUN

As a member of the Clinic's Board of Directors, its Mission and Vision is important to me in a number of ways, but in particular its emphasis on inclusion. The Clinic sets a standard for how it celebrates and appreciates the diversity of women, with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and skills, in its clients and staff. From my perspective, it is fundamental to recognise and honour the dignity of each woman at the Clinic and to assist her in accessing her strength.

Personally, the Clinic provides stability for me in its amazing community of talented, resourceful and resilient women. I am inspired and amazed by the clients, staff members and board members with whom I have met and worked. This community provides me with a sense of belonging and of participating in an important cause together.

Stability for the Clinic means consistency in staff and Board members, but probably most importantly in funding. The Clinic's programs cannot continue to function without a stable base of funding. There is an ever-increasing need for the Clinic's services, which makes the need for reliable funding even more important.

For me, stability comes with the ability to make informed choices and knowing what to expect. It relates to knowing that there are people I can count on when I need them.

Experiences of violence and the legal system are the opposite of stable—they inflict chaos into our lives.

Stability is knowing that despite the chaos I have someone I can call to talk to and that I have a ruthless advocate in my corner.

Stability is knowing what to expect and consistency. After experiences of violence—stability is so crucial in the healing process. Stability allows for safety and space to plan for the future.

MANDI





DEEPA

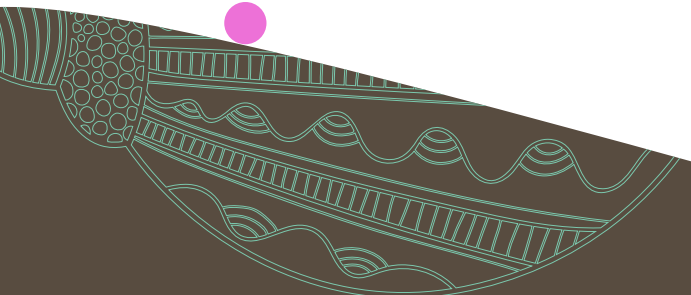
As the Clinic's Legal Director, my goal is to assist women from underserved communities who have survived violence with sensitivity and awareness. I firmly believe a woman should be offered services based on how she self-identifies and should be treated with utmost respect and dignity in the services she is offered.

A well-resourced Clinic is better positioned to assist women wanting to break the isolation that threatens their safety and to receive the services they need to survive violence. For the Clinic to maintain stability, adjust to the needs of the community, advocate for a more just society and to provide women with personalized services based on their specific needs, it must first secure stable resources that are free of the threat of reduction or contingent on the current socio-political environment.

Stability for the Clinic means services that are rooted in the needs of women who become part of our community while making sure that we are accessible and available to women who are underserved and under-represented in the community.

As a lesbian of colour, I faced multiple barriers as an immigrant in the 70s that caused significant instability to my family and me. Early on, stability meant not owing anyone anything. Whether socially or professionally, truly believing in my value as a human being and not depending on anyone's definition of who I am or what success looks like is what provided me with the ability to advocate for myself. Today, I advocate for others.

I joined the Clinic in 2002 because I felt that its Mission and Vision align with mine – to work towards knowledge, strength and social justice for women and their children. Through my work as the Director of Interpreter Services, I have the Clinic's trust to create and innovate programs and services that provide staff with a place of work in which respect and support reign. This level of stability is fundamental to being able to maintain focus on our clients' needs and for women to feel they can trust and rely on us to help them find some stability in their lives.



The hope is that women who come to use our services would, at some point, find some **stability** in their lives through our commitment and dedication.



NORA

The Clinic embodies what stability means to me personally. It provides a sense of support, safety and security to women who have experienced violence. For many, the Clinic is the only 'stable' thing in the lives of the women that it serves. As a feminist who believes in intersectionality, it is important to remember that violence against women can be institutionalized and amplified by intersections of race, class, ability, sexual orientation and identity. No one woman is more deserving of help than another. We must recognize shifts in privilege and power, and act accordingly.

We must foster a sense of community among women and allies, but also encourage self-determination and individual power within women. The Clinic embodies these principles.

Women can come to the clinic and have the experience of being heard and being believed. They can have the comfort of knowing that the Clinic is a safe place, and one that will put their needs first.



AVA

To me **stability** means strength, safety and security. It is a sense of consistency. It is knowing that you can rely on someone, or something, to be accessible when needed.

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Mount Sinai Hospital
Native Women's Resource Centre

Nellies
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(OCASI)
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Osgoode Hall Law School
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Clinic
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Women who seek the services of the Clinic usually have chaotic lives and the Clinic provides them stability by being the serene haven they rely on to secure a peaceful, happy, healthy and safe future for themselves and those they love.

The Clinic provides me with a sense of inner peace that I so need in our hectic world. The Clinic is a perfect example of what goodwill, kindness and the desire to bring positive change in the world can do to help people like me see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

I am a strong supporter of the Clinic because I would love for my daughters to grow up in a world where the Clinic's Vision has materialized and women are able to live lives free from violence.

Stability to the Clinic means a secure source of funding and positive political will to be able to confidently carry out our mission and serve the thousands of women who would otherwise have nowhere to turn.

CAROLE

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Freedom From Violence.



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