

Press Release
March 10, 2014

PROVINCIAL SHELTER 'DAY IN THE LIFE' STATISTICS SUPPORTED BY YWCA EMERGENCY SHELTER DATA

Calgary, AB – Shelters for women fleeing family violence remain consistently full and women are staying longer according to data released today by a provincial association of shelters and the YWCA of Calgary.

On November 6, 2013, Alberta's women's shelters recorded the number of women and children supported for the annual 'day in the life' count. On that day, 41 of Alberta's family violence shelters served 926 women and 1,102 children. On that same day, 99 women and 97 children could not be accommodated.

At the YWCA Sheriff King Home emergency shelter, longer stays for women fleeing violence is quite evident. In 2012 the average length of stay at the shelter was 20 days and in 2013 the average length of stay was 24 days, an increase of 20 per cent. Last night, the shelter provided beds for 18 women and 22 children.

"It is becoming more and more critical for us to prioritize women based on risk assessments to determine who truly needs to be in shelter and who can be helped in other ways," said Cynthia Wild, Director, Client Services for the YWCA.

The YWCA is consistently full, in both our emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. Occasionally women fleeing violence are able to access other options the YWCA has to offer, when their risk assessment does not require the high level security of a shelter. However, lack of affordable housing in the community for women at risk is compounding the issue and lessening the chance for women to find safe and appropriate housing.

Full provincial shelter results can be found on the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters website at
<http://www.acws.ca/collaborate-document/2402/view>

Today, media are invited to contact us for an interview about both provincial and YWCA specific shelter statistics to learn more about the challenges and barriers faced by women fleeing family violence and the shelters that serve them.

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The YWCA of Calgary provides emergency shelter, housing, counselling and skills to women who are struggling with poverty, homelessness, family violence and social exclusion. For more than 100 years, the YWCA has continued to adapt to the changing needs of the city. Serving 1,285 women and 328 children in our shelter programs in 2013, the YWCA is focused on empowering women and their families to move from a place of vulnerability to one of hope and resilience. For more information, visit **ywcaofcalgary.com**.

The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is a provincial umbrella non-profit organization with a two-pronged mission: to support member women's shelters and work together to end domestic violence. ACWS administers the annual Global Shelter Data Count (and the Alberta Shelter Data Count), out of its Edmonton office, as an outcome of the first world conference of women's shelters in 2008, hosted by ACWS. For links to past Annual Data Count results, go to <http://www.acws.ca/fact-sheets-statistics>.