



RISE SUPPORT CENTRE 2024 IMPACT REPORT

# Rise with Purpose

Creating Brighter Futures Together





# *Our story*

In 2024, we embraced the call to RISE with Purpose, standing alongside women and families facing unexpected pregnancies with unwavering compassion and support. Through the dedication of our team, volunteers, and generous partners, we provided life-affirming care, practical resources, and hope for brighter futures. Every conversation, every act of kindness, and every step forward was a testament to the power of community, faith, and purpose. As we reflect on this past year, we celebrate the lives impacted, the challenges overcome, and the opportunities ahead to continue rising together—with courage, love, and a steadfast commitment to those we serve.

# A message from our leaders

## Rising with Purpose: Walking Alongside Women in Their Journey

At RISE, we believe that every woman facing an unexpected pregnancy deserves compassionate support, clear information, and practical help as she navigates this life-changing moment. Our commitment is to rise with purpose—to stand beside her, providing not just immediate support but also the ongoing care she needs for the road ahead.

This past year, we have seen another increase in client support appointments. Each of these appointments represents a woman who reached out for guidance, a woman struggling after abortion or pregnancy loss, a mother seeking resources, or a family in need of encouragement. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to respond with services and programs intentionally designed to offer real help—whether through pregnancy options information, parenting support, or after-pregnancy care.

Your partnership in this work matters. Every prayer, every donation, and every act of service strengthens our ability to meet women where they are and walk with them as they take their next steps. Thank you for rising with us, for believing in the value of every life, and for ensuring that no woman has to face her journey alone.



Cheryl Lindquist,  
Executive Director



Sarah Rytkönen,  
Chair of the Board

When reflecting on 2024, the word "thankful" stands out. We're living in challenging times, with uncertainty surrounding the economy and global issues. Yet, in the face of these difficulties, we have witnessed the continued and faithful support from individuals, local businesses, churches, and organizations who have partnered with us to help those struggling in our community. We are so grateful.

However, the needs of our community continue to grow, and so does our responsibility. We've seen an unprecedented number of clients and distributed more practical support items than ever before. We've had the privilege of walking alongside more individuals during tough times than ever before. None of this would be possible without your ongoing support.

To continue our vital work with our growing needs, we are looking for partners who can help ensure we keep our doors open and our programs running. That's why we are asking you to consider becoming a monthly supporter. Your ongoing contributions will provide a steady, reliable source of funding, allowing us to plan for the future and expand our services to meet the growing demand. Your support makes all the difference—whether by becoming a monthly donor, donating items from our care package list, or simply helping us spread the word about RISE. Your prayers for our clients, staff, and volunteers are also deeply appreciated.

Together, we can keep working toward a brighter tomorrow, ensuring that RISE remains a vital part of our community's future. Thank you, and God bless!

# Our impact: 2024 CLIENT STATS

RISE clients are diverse and represent a population that is underserved in our community; women facing an unintended or challenging pregnancy and those struggling in early parenting, or following a perinatal loss from abortion, adoption, miscarriage/stillbirth, or infant loss.

**1108**  
Client appointments

**165**  
Individuals & families supported

## WHO ARE OUR CLIENTS?

**14-47**  
years old

**90%**  
women

**60%**  
single parents

**90%**  
report the pregnancy was  
unplanned

**77%**  
have an annual household  
income less than \$30,000

**94%**  
of clients return for  
on-going support

## TOP 3 ON-GOING SUPPORT PROGRAMS (based on participation)

1. Practical Support Program
2. Moms and Tots
3. Mentoring/Emotional Support

## TOP WAYS CLIENTS CONNECT WITH RISE

1. Referrals from York Region Public Health
2. Returning clients
3. Friend/relative
4. Internet search

*"Despite there being so many clients I don't ever feel like I'm forgotten about and I do feel like I can reach out and talk if need be. So I truly appreciate what you're doing!!"*



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

18

Local support agencies we met with

6

Supporting churches we connected with

9

New community connections

By strengthening existing relationships and building new ones, we've increased our presence in the community—contributing to the growth of our centre and expanding our ability to meet the evolving needs of our clients.

This year, we enhanced our network of mental health, housing, and community support services, enabling our Client Services Director to refer women to the resources they need more effectively. As awareness of our work at RISE has grown, so has community involvement—leading to more food drives and donations that help us respond to the steady rise in demand.

Increased collaboration has also led to a rise in referrals from social workers and healthcare professionals. These trusted connections are vital in helping us reach women who may not otherwise know where to turn—ensuring they receive compassionate, timely, and holistic care.

*"We feel loved and cared for"*



# Program highlights

## 1. Annual Moms and Tots Mother's Day Tea



## 2. Practical Support Program - Care Packages



150+

Children aged 0-3 years are currently enrolled in support programs and receiving a monthly care package of essential items needed for their basic care

50

Care packages/month average (\$150 average cost/care package)

20,833

Essential items given out 42% increase from 2023

## 3. Annual Moms and Tots Christmas Party



# Client story



## UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS:

### A Teen Mom's Journey of Strength and Community

\* Alena's story

*Name changed for privacy.*

When she arrived in Canada as a 14-year-old refugee, separated from her parents and living with relatives, Alena never expected to be a teen mom. That was her mom's experience... her grandma's experience; not hers. Yet, when the pink lines showed just before she turned 19, Alena was surprised but not devastated. Somehow, she always felt ready to be a mother.

The women in her life understood the hardship of being a young mom and they tried to push for an abortion, but that was unthinkable to Alena. While her boyfriend wasn't quite as quick in acceptance, in time he committed to being there for her and the baby – his son.

And he's kept his word. "He's been nothing but supportive, and honestly, he's the best father ever. I knew he was going to be," she says warmly. "He works hard for our family."

But early motherhood hasn't been easy. Shortly before her son was born, they moved hours away and Alena dealt with a lot of loneliness. When a friend suggested she check out Rise Support Centre's Moms & Tots group, Alena jumped at the opportunity.

"It was such a welcoming and relaxing space!" she says. "Now it's such a bright spot in our week. I look forward to watching my son happily play and having a chance to have a hot cup of coffee and chat with other moms about our week."

At Rise, Alena found her community. A place without judgement and peers who became friends outside of the playgroup. It has become a place to share life, where she knows she's not alone in her struggles. It eases her doubts when she wonders if she's doing this mom-thing right. She no longer felt alone as a young mom in a new community.

"It has given me a sense of community. I was basically a stranger and it helped me make friends outside the group," Alena says. "For my son, it has helped him develop socially. Seeing him so comfortable with everyone makes me happy."

As a young family on a single income, Alena is so thankful for the Monthly Care Packages they received for many months. Now that her son is older and not going through as many diapers, she passes on the care packages most months saying, "Others need them more."

Motherhood brought up a lot of her own childhood traumas and it coincided with the first pilot program at the Centre to support postnatal anxiety and mental health. Alena attended the 12-week Rise Together CBT group and found it immensely helpful. Having a safe place to share vulnerably and hear other moms share their struggles helped her see that she wasn't "crazy," nor was she alone. The program taught her helpful coping tools to work through her thoughts, feelings and emotions.

"It helped me realize a lot of things about the way I go about motherhood," Alena says. "It made me feel closer to that community. I felt safe to be vulnerable and it made me stronger."

As Alena looks around at her little family of three with a grateful heart and lots of joy, she wishes she could talk to her younger self battling fears from everyone's opinions and judgement. Seeing life from where she is now, she'd say, "Don't let other people get in your head. You know deep inside what is best for you...you know not to doubt yourself. You're meant for this."

And she is. She's always been meant to be her little man's mom. "I can't imagine life without him! I've been through so much, and just seeing him as such a loving baby and a bright light in the world gives me hope that I'm doing something right. I'm helping to build someone who will positively impact the world and our society."

# Our programs & services

All support services and programs are free, confidential, and provided without judgment. Available services and programs include:

## PREGNANCY SUPPORT

-  Pregnancy Tests
-  Pregnancy Decision-Making Support
-  Growing Together: Prenatal Support & Education

## PREGNANCY LOSS SUPPORT

-  Perinatal Loss Support
-  Post-Abortion Support

## PEER MENTORING SUPPORT

-  NEST Mentoring (Nurture, Empower, Support, Transform)
-  Spiritual Support & Mentoring

## MENTAL WELLNESS SUPPORT

-  Rise Together

## PARENTING SUPPORT

-  Moms & Tots
-  MPower
-  Flourishing Family
-  Growing & Thriving

## MATERIAL SUPPORT

-  Practical Support Program (PSP)
-  Growing Goodness: Nutrition Support
-  Precious Cargo

## DONOR IMPACT

### Fidgets Fundraiser



On June 15, we hosted a fun and successful fundraiser night with the comedy troupe, The Fidgets! This improv night was held at The Bridge Church in Markham, with 120 people in attendance. With audience participation and input, the hilarious trio kept everyone laughing. The highlight of the evening was when they navigated the stage filled with live mouse traps, barefoot and blindfolded, acting out a sketch. Thank you to those who attended, sponsored and donated towards this show. It was a great way to raise funds and awareness in our community!



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR 2024 INCOME

General	\$ 23,465
Other Charities	\$ 54,351
Hands to Hands Campaign	\$ 54,166
Flower Power Campaign	\$ 17,137
Baby Bottle Campaign	\$ 3,019
Gov. Grants - Federal	\$ 53,914
Baby Supplies	\$ 830
Monthly Donations	\$ 9,320
Event Income	\$ 3,763
Interest Income	\$ 1,207
Monthly PAD	\$ 7,320
Municipal Grants	\$ 32,186
Misc. Income	\$ 60

**Total** **\$ 260,738**

### 2023 VS. 2024 COMPARISON

	2023	2024
Income	\$ 182,982	\$ 255,919
Expenditures	\$ 201,099	\$ 215,544

**Net Income/ (deficiency)** **(\$ 18,117)** **\$40,375**

"We would like to sincerely thank you and the entire Rise support team for your incredible help and generosity. We truly appreciate it. The [care] package we received yesterday was perfect—filled with so many high-quality clothes, plenty of formula, and other essential items. We are deeply grateful for your kindness."

# Looking ahead: Our Vision for 2025

As we step into 2025, our vision is rooted in hope, growth, and purpose. We are committed to expanding our reach so that more women and families facing unexpected pregnancies can access the compassionate care and support they deserve. Our goal is to increase client appointments by strengthening outreach, deepening community connections, and ensuring every woman knows she's not alone.



At the same time, we are dedicated to continually improving our operations—refining our systems, enhancing training, and fostering a culture of excellence—so that every aspect of our work reflects the highest standards of care. Our new initiative *Intercultural and Interfaith Insights: Enriching Pregnancy and Parenting Support with Cultural Awareness* will help equip our team, as well as other care providers, with the knowledge and skills needed to deliver culturally sensitive and respectful care for everyone. To find out more about this exciting project see [www.risesupportcentre.ca/marp/](http://www.risesupportcentre.ca/marp/)

Finally, we recognize the vital role of financial stability in sustaining this mission. That's why we are focused on growing our community of monthly donors, whose consistent support provides a strong foundation for the year ahead and beyond. Together, we rise with purpose—ready to meet needs, embrace challenges, and walk with women every step of the way.

It takes a minimum of **\$18,000** each month to keep our doors open and our services running. Your generous support ensures that vulnerable women, men, and children in our community have continued access to compassionate care and essential programs—both in times of crisis and as they begin to rebuild.

At RISE, we walk with each client *one step at a time*—believing that transformation happens through consistent care and intentional support. Our five essential steps to move from crisis to thriving include:

1. **Safe Place** – where clients are welcomed without judgment
2. **Time and Resources** – to process, reflect, and explore their options
3. **Equipped Professionals** – offering personalized, informed support
4. **Program Participation** – building skills, confidence, and community
5. **Stable, On-going Support** – to ensure long-term well-being

Together, these steps create a path forward—and your donation helps make every step possible.

## BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR!

When you become a monthly donor, you walk alongside our clients—helping them RISE with purpose and build stronger, brighter futures.



Scan to support us!



## BE INVOLVED

Support one or more of our programs!

		
<b>\$290/month</b> Gives the gift of <b>Moms &amp; Tots</b>	<b>\$150</b> Gives the gift of a <b>Care Package</b>	<b>\$75/apt</b> Gives the gift of <b>Pregnancy Options &amp; Decision-Making Support</b>

For more donation information, please visit our website at [www.risesupportcentre.ca/2-donate](http://www.risesupportcentre.ca/2-donate)

### Sponsor

- Client Programs
- Client Workshops or Events (grocery gift cards, Mother's Day or Christmas gifts, etc.)
- Fundraising Events
  - Flower Power - Spring campaign
  - Hand to Hands - Fall campaign

### Volunteer

At the centre, behind the scenes, or on our board of directors! Contact the centre to see how you can be involved and make a difference!

- Client Programs
- Fundraising Events
- Board of Directors

For more information please contact the centre: [info@risesupportcentre.ca](mailto:info@risesupportcentre.ca)



*"Finding this organization has completely transformed so many areas of my life. Just the genuine care and passion that every person working at RISE has for, not only their work, but the women and families they help and make a difference. The last three years I have gone through some of the worst struggles in my life, and talking to Cheryl and Julie were some of the most helpful things during this time. Not only was I never NEVER met with any judgment, but I was met instantly without question or hesitation, just overall love and the feeling of security, support, love and safety. Without RISE I honestly cannot imagine how I would've survived these few years. Not only them but ALL staff are so warm and welcoming and go above and beyond just to help. Words honestly do not do their work justice, this organization is one of a kind and it's because the staff working there truly care and want to make a difference/ help in any way they can! I feel so honoured to be a part of this."*

# Thank you to our supporters

## OUR CHURCH PARTNERS

- Blessed Frederic Ozanam Church
- The Bridge
- Cornerstone Christian Community Church
- Eastridge Evangelical Missionary Church
- Hillside Evangelical Missionary Church
- Hope Bible Church Markham
- In2one Community Church
- Knights of Columbus Council #17065
- Langstaff Assembly
- Life Church
- Markham Baptist Church
- Markham Missionary Church- Women's Group
- Milliken Wesleyan Methodist Church
- Springvale Church
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
- St. Andrew's United Church (UCW)
- Unionville Alliance Church

## OUR SUPPORTERS

- Prayer warriors
- Financial donors
- Volunteers

## OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS

### Grants:

- Red Cross
- York Region
- Canadian Heritage: Multicultural and Anti-Racism Program (MARF)

### Local Community Supporters:

- Peter and Suzie's No Frills
- Reesor's Farm
- T & T Bakery
- Valleyview Gardens
- The Cupcake Garden
- St. John's Ambulance
- Markham Guild of Village Crafts
- Casting Off the Cold
- Knights of Columbus #17065
- 100 Women Who Care Stouffville
- Radiant Way Montessori
- The 700 Club Canada

### Event Sponsors: Fidgets Comedy Night

- Edmunds Home Improvements
- Super Swimmer Squad: Backyard Aquatics
- Ryt Saunas
- Allan Abrigo Real Estate
- Petra Hygienic Systems



