

Alice Housing
(W. Williams Non-Profit Housing Association)

Annual Report

2003 / 2004

Mission Statement

Alice Housing offers hope for women and children to begin a new life away from family violence by providing a safe and supportive community as they rebuild their lives.

Philosophy

Alice Housing believes that every person has the right to live without fear of physical, psychological, emotional or sexual abuse; that all people should have equal opportunity to develop their potential to live full and rich lives; that children have the right to grow up without terror and without fear from the very people who are supposed to protect them from harm; and that all people have the right to decide for themselves the direction their lives will take, according to their own personal values and needs.

Background Information

Alice Housing's mandate is to provide housing for women and children who are survivors of abuse, but it does much more than that. Women often remain in abusive situations because they lack not only housing, but also family support, financial, and emotional resources. Alice Housing offers a supportive environment in which healing can begin and women can make positive changes in their lives and the lives of their children.

While first-stage housing responds to short-term emergencies, Alice Housing provides safe and secure housing for an extended period. During this time women who are mentally and physically recovering as a result of their abuse can make the transition from an emergency shelter to a permanent home and independence. By providing affordable housing, supporting the women through the difficult transition stage and helping facilitate the empowerment of their families, Alice Housing offers women and their children an opportunity to overcome the devastating effects of violence, to deal with the past, to address the present and to plan for their future.

Once the healing has begun, and the women and children begin to move away from the chaotic and threatening existence of their former lives, personal issues such as trauma and recovery, unresolved grief, emotional and economic abandonment, low self-esteem and compromised life-coping skills are addressed in cooperation with the support of staff at Alice Housing. As the varied and individual needs of the women are clarified, a process of accessing appropriate community and agency services is initiated. The women are provided with information and supported in their search for education, employment training and self-help groups. This road to empowerment often leads the women to seek compensation, justice and protection through the provincial justice system to obtain full custody of their children, obtain restraining orders and lay charges against their ex-partners. Alice Housing supports these efforts and advocates on the women's behalf.

Objectives

1. To provide safe, non-judgmental housing for women, with or without children, leaving abusive situations who have identified their own need for on-going support and counseling.
2. To increase women's well-being and self-sufficiency.
3. To provide women and children the support and counseling needed to recover from the effects of abuse and trauma.
4. To decrease the chance that women and children will return to abusive households.
5. To ensure that women and children feel safe.
6. To ensure that women and children are no longer living in abusive environments.
7. To provide the opportunity for women to develop increased positive coping skills enabling them to deal with a variety of personal issues and become aware of the cycle of abuse.
8. To provide women with safe, affordable housing so that they do not have to make the difficult decision between remaining in abusive relationships or becoming homeless.
9. To provide children with the opportunity to heal from trauma in a safe environment.

Nominating Committee Report

The following Members have agreed to offer for re-election to the 2004/2005 Board of Directors:

Kelly Walker
Erin Desmond
Cindy Crowell
Penny Harding
Sandy Sarto
Tara Furlong
JoAnn Bidgood
Cheryl Enman
Elizabeth Chard
Erin Flannery
Colleen Clark

The Nominating Committee has screened the following applicants and is pleased to present them to the Annual General Meeting:

Gwen Blake
Nancy Diamond
Alison MacDonald

Motion: On behalf of the Nominating Committee, I move that the following individuals be accepted to serve on the 2004/2005 Alice Housing Board of Directors:

Kelly Walker (Co-Chair)
Erin Desmond (Secretary)
Cindy Crowell
Penny Harding
Sandy Sarto
Tara Furlong
JoAnn Bidgood
Cheryl Enman
Elizabeth Chard (Co-Chair)
Erin Flannery
Colleen Clark (Treasurer)
Gwen Blake
Nancy Diamond
Alison MacDonald

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandy Sarto
Nominating Committee Chair

Co-Chair Report

It's been quite a year for Alice Housing. We added five units through funding from *HRDC - Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative*, received word that we would be receiving funding from the *National Homeless Initiative (NHI)* to implement our third stage housing program, and celebrated our 20th anniversary in style at the Lord Nelson, complete with our own blackout, an uplifting speech by a woman who had lived at Alice Housing and a stellar performance from Linda Carvery.

We introduced Marilyn Berry to our staff in the spring when we were fortunate enough to get a grant from the *Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative* to purchase a new property to house (primarily) young women leaving abuse. Marilyn engineered the purchase and happily stayed on to replace Rhonda Brophy who left us for another career opportunity. Marilyn lends her professional talents to our fund development efforts as well as serving our clients as a Family Counsellor. We owe much of the success of our 20th anniversary dinner and calendar to her efforts.

"Project Third Step", our research report on third stage housing, was completed and distributed to stakeholders in May and amazingly we received word in January that we would be able to put our findings into fruition thanks to *NHI* funding. This funding will allow us to purchase an office building/drop in centre, hire an outreach worker for eight months and purchase a few third stage housing units. The vision of third stage housing is moving along with lightening speed, a tribute to its eminent sensibility, the focused planning of our Executive Director, Angela Power and the splendid work Susanna Steinitz put into the year long research.

When I look back on my four years' on the Board, I can hardly believe how far we've come. Then, we barely had two staff members (for a time we barely had one) and our finances were very tenuous. We now have four full-time staff members and are about to hire a fifth. We have a reserve fund. We have 22 units and will shortly have another four more. We have the capacity to properly manage our buildings and offer professional counselling to the women in our units and their children as well as all past clients. We have substantially raised our profile in the community. A great deal of the credit for this turnaround is due to our Executive Director, Angela Power. Her energy, initiative and ability have made an enormous difference to this organization. She has also gathered around her a wonderful staff and created a work environment that attracts good people and makes them want to stay around, giving us some much needed stability – Tina Riley (Program Assistant) and Frances Blair (Housing Coordinator) are dedicated to the work they do and we are grateful for that. Angela has worked hard to improve our finances so that we can begin to compensate Alice Housing's staff properly, which will hopefully also lead to reduced staff turnaround.

One of the highlights of the Board this year included our training day, a much-appreciated opportunity to deepen our knowledge about Alice Housing and make a few plans for the future. Three of us are leaving this year, after four years of pleasurable service: Nancy Neil (my co-chair), Cathy Crosby (our perennial Auction chair), and myself. We will all miss our Wednesday night meetings and collegial friendships with the other Board members. The strength of the Board will continue with new members: Nancy Diamond and Gwen Blake. The ability of the Board to renew itself is an ever-recurring wonder.

Respectfully Submitted;
Bette Tetreault, Board Co-chair

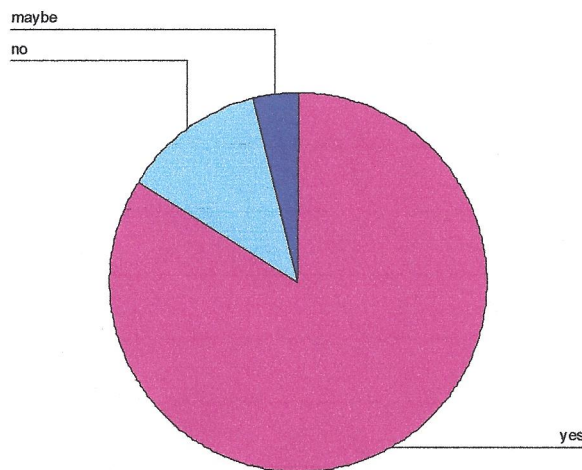
Executive Director's Report

Chronically, families in our second stage housing units have difficulty securing safe, affordable housing when it is time to leave our one year program. In May 2002, with funding from the *Justice Department's, Community Mobilization Program*, Alice Housing began a research project to determine whether there was indeed a need for long-term, safe, supportive housing for women leaving our second stage housing. Our vision was to create a third stage housing component to our existing program, if in fact this venture was financially feasible and deemed to be filling a gap in the community.

In May 2003, our research report, "Project Third Step: Housing Problems and Solutions for Women Who Have Left Abusive Relationships", was completed. Susanna Steinitz, who compiled this research, completed what I knew her most important task would be in doing this project – to provide a forum for women to be heard, and to empower those women to define what Third Stage, long term housing should include. The majority of the women interviewed stated that they would like to live in an Alice Housing "third stage" or long term housing project (see Figure). The women advocated for support in the form of social events and staff that are available on an as-needed basis. Most women felt that they needed counselling, advocacy and a sympathetic ear regularly, but not as intensively or frequently as they had while in second stage housing. In fact, the mere knowledge that support is easily accessible is important for many women. While these women felt that their need for counselling and support had indeed lessened during their time in second stage housing, the transition to a life independent of their former partner was a journey that required more than a year to complete. "For people that have been through second stage housing they should have the option that if they are not 100% ready to fly on their own...there should be someplace else they can go to (for longer term housing and support)" (Former Alice Housing Tenant).

"Project Third Step" has been circulated to other agencies in HRM, Universities and several agencies outside of the province.

Would you want to live in an Alice Housing Third Stage Housing Project?



This year marked our 20th anniversary. Since 1983, volunteers, staff, supporters and clients have built a foundation and continued to work toward the goal of families remaining free from abuse. Over the last three years our staff has increased to four full time workers and their dedication and commitment embodies the message this agency adheres to – empowerment and a healthy working and living environment. This summer, thanks to the *Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative*, we expanded our safe housing capacity to specifically address the needs of women under the age of thirty by opening a fifth building. With twenty-two safe housing units, counselling services and a drop-in centre, we are the largest second stage housing agency in the Maritimes.

On April 7, 2004, Minister Geoff Regan announced that Alice Housing was to receive funding from the *National Homelessness Initiative* to purchase a new drop-in centre/office and a few third-stage housing units. Our third stage housing program will be the first of its kind in Canada.

Our Housing Coordinator attended a workshop in Ottawa and several workshops in Halifax that introduced the data collection program *HIFIS (The Homeless Individuals and Families Information System Initiative)* This program serves as a source of comparable data on the characteristics of the homeless (or at risk) population across Canada. The data base does not identify the actual individuals who are in second stage housing units, but rather the number of clients being serviced at any given point in time. Alice Housing has implemented this data collection and this information is used by the *National Homelessness Initiative* to increase the understanding of homelessness in Canada and serves all stakeholders across Canada, including service providers, researchers and multiple levels of government.

For 20 years, Alice Housing has been able to change the lives of hundreds of families. We have been able to prevent women from continuing to live in a situation where bruises and degradation are a daily occurrence and where being killed by their abuser is a strong possibility. We have prevented children from growing up to be victims or perpetrators of violence and we have shown our clients that the community is plentiful with individuals who will not tolerate violence and will do whatever they can to help. As an agency, we are committed to expanding and enhancing our services to the best of our ability. so that women have the resources necessary to remain free from a cycle of abuse.

Respectfully Submitted,
Angela Power MSW, RSW
Executive Director

Alice Housing Programming Report

Women who are living with Alice Housing have made a commitment to participate in “programming” during their tenure with Alice Housing. Every effort is made to ensure that programming initiatives meet the relevant needs of the women and children that we serve. Women are consulted throughout their stay to determine the type and design of programs that are offered.

Alice Housing Programs are –

- ♀ Women’s and Family Counselling
- ♀ Advocacy and Support
- ♀ Resource Centre
- ♀ Community Meals
- ♀ Workshops
- ♀ Support Group
- ♀ Special Celebrations
- ♀ Community Visits

Requests for Services

Alice Housing has experienced an increase in the demand for services and safe housing over the past year.

Requests for Services

Total No. of Requests for Services Received During the Year	3,620
% of Requests for Counselling and Support Services	70.9%
No. of Admission Requests	160
Total No. of Women Who Lived in Alice Housing During the Year	30
Total No. of Dependent Children Living in Alice Housing During the Year	35

Women’s and Family Counselling

Women receive individual counselling sessions and support concerning such issues as family violence, sexual assaults, past childhood abuse, sexual harassment, poverty, unemployment, educational goals, employment pursuits, child custody and access, parenting, benefits of volunteerism, legal matters, health, addictions, self-esteem, housing, and budgeting to assist them in their journey to recovery and to rebuild their lives free from violence. *Healing, recovery, and empowerment* form the foundation of the counselling program.

Workshop and Other Activities

Regular evening programs were held throughout the year for both women and their children. Special child-centered physical and leisure activities were provided for all children while women participated in workshops, followed by a community supper. The Women’s Support Group also met regularly. Women and families often experience isolation and diminished support from family and friends when they leave an abusive relationship or home. Alice Housing works to support women during this period and to

promote a strong sense of community. Women and children come together to celebrate special occasions such as Christmas, Mother's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and a summer picnic.

Special thanks to:

- ≈ St. James United Church, Dartmouth, for the use of their gym and facilities;
- ≈ Grace Chapel, Rockingham, for providing a wonderful Christmas dinner and gifts for all women and children;
- ≈ Mom's to Mom's for Christmas gift bags;
- ≈ Merrick Holm Barristers and Solicitors for helping with school supplies;
- ≈ Beta Sigma Phi for providing gift bags for our women on Mother's Day
- ≈ The Dartmouth Parent Resource Centre for providing assistance with children's programming, and to
- ≈ Volunteers Cindy Pettipas, Diane MacDonald, and Judy MacMillan.

Resource Centre

Women are able to access helpful and valuable information through Alice Housing's Resource Centre. It is because of the generosity of the community and our donors in giving items of clothing and personal and household items that we are able to assist women to re-establish themselves in their new home. We also want to thank the women themselves for their assistance in maintaining the Donation Room.

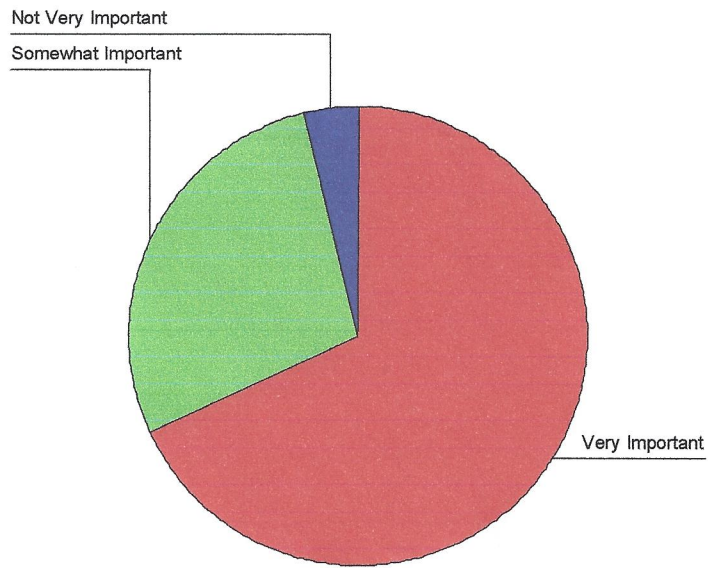
Advocacy, Support and Outreach

We provide on-going support and advocacy services to both current and former tenants through outreach, our Resource Centre and through counselling services. Referrals are also made to appropriate community and government agencies.

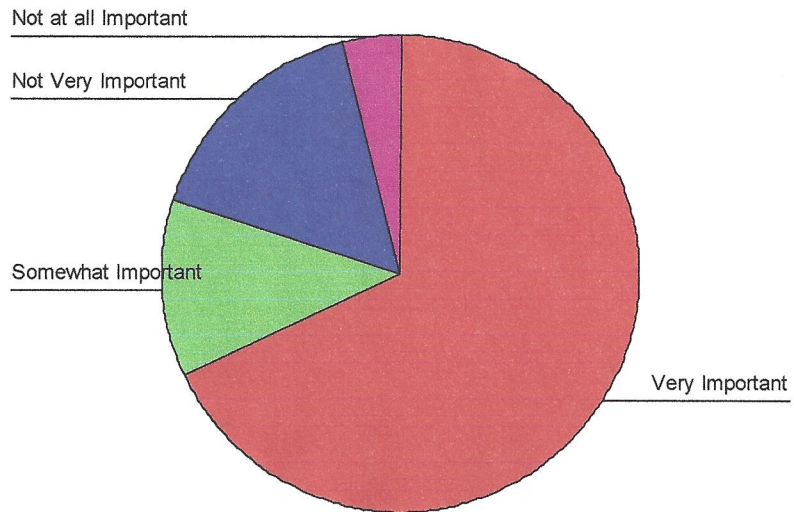
We look forward to new opportunities for women and children in the coming year. Our future plans include an enhanced outreach program, increased programming, a computer centre for women, and a new children's play centre.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marilyn Berry, RSW
Family Counsellor

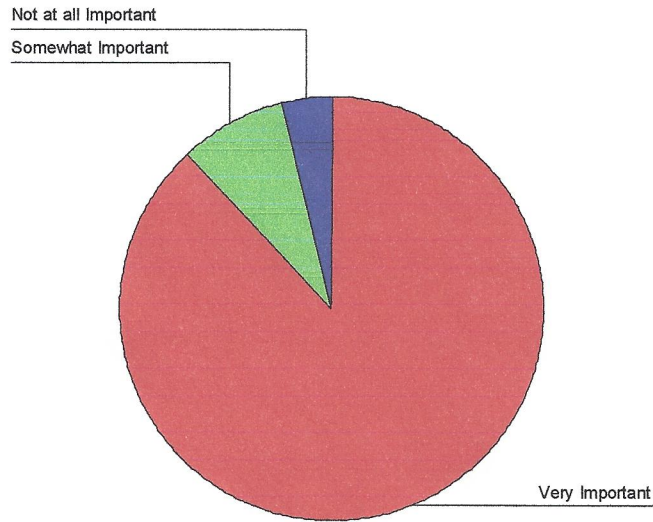
**How Important or Helpful was the Practical Assistance You Received?
(Bus Tickets, Grocery Vouchers, Donations, Etc)**



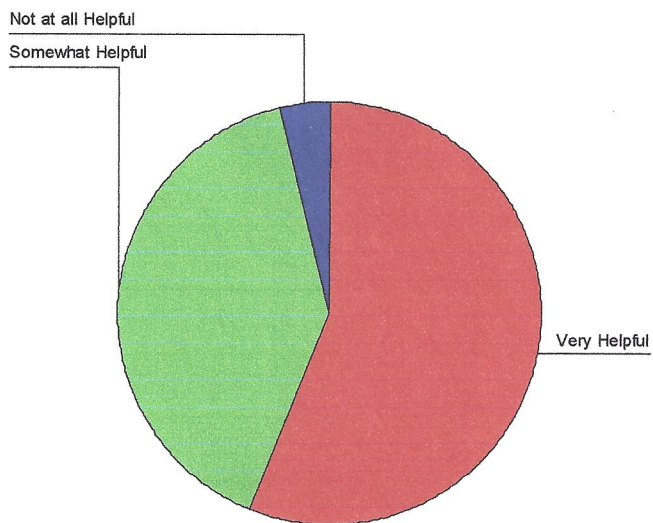
How Important Was It To You That Alice Housing's Units Are In Undisclosed Locations?



How Important or Helpful has the Counselling Service at Alice Housing Been?



How Helpful Were the Supportive Services you received from Alice Housing Staff (i.e staff attending court/legal appointments with you)



Personnel Committee Report

The Personnel Committee of the Alice Housing Board of Directors met a number of times to review and make recommendations on employee related situations that have arisen over the past year. The committee serves as a resource to the Executive Director and her staff and meets on an as needed basis to address issues such as employment vacancies, salary increases, job descriptions and to review our personnel policy.

In May 2003, Alice Housing's Family Counsellor left our agency to pursue another employment opportunity. The contract for our Youth Safe Housing Project Coordinator, Marilyn Berry, ended as scheduled on April 30th. Marilyn, a social worker with a lengthy history working with women's issues and a strong fund development background, was recommended to the Personnel Committee by the Executive Director to fill the vacant Family Counselling position and to also act as the Fund Development Coordinator. The Board had previously identified the need for a Fund Development Coordinator to assist the Executive Director. The Personnel Committee felt that the agency should explore whether it was feasible to combine two positions; Family Counsellor and Fund Development Coordinator. In creating this combined position, the Personnel Committee clearly stated that the counselling needs of clients must be first priority.

The Board of Director's approved the recommendation of the Personnel Committee and Marilyn Berry was offered and accepted a three month contract in May 2003. On September 1, 2003 the Board of Director's approved this as a full time permanent position. This new position has worked very well for the staff, Board and agency as a whole. We are pleased to welcome Marilyn to the team of Alice Housing. .

In February, 2004, the Personnel Committee met to evaluate the Agency's ability to increase staff salaries on a percentage basis. Since October, 2001, the Personnel Committee and the Board of Director's of Alice Housing have been committed to review the salaries of staff to ensure that their salaries are compensatory to similar agencies and similar staff positions within other HRM non-profit agencies. As a result, the staff of Alice Housing received an increase that is within the financial ability of the Agency.

The Personnel Committee has been available for consultation on any personnel related issues that have arisen over the year and will remain available for staff support when needed. We believe that supporting staff through training opportunities, job enhancements, salary increases when possible, and a healthy working environment are imperative to maintain the high quality of service that our clients receive.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Neil
Personnel Committee Member

Fund Development Report

Core Funding -

The Department of Community Services and Housing Services, Government of Canada (SCPI), and United Way Halifax Region provided core funding to Alice Housing during 2003-2004.

In-Kind Donations -

Donations of in-kind services and items were received from a number of businesses, individuals, and groups. These donations greatly assisted in alleviating the need for Alice Housing to plan and carry out extensive fundraising and were extremely helpful in easing the burden of women and children in their efforts to re-build their lives free from violence.

A special thank-you to the many individuals, groups, and businesses that sponsored women and their families for Christmas. The kindness and generosity of sponsors was indeed overwhelming and supportive during a very difficult time in the lives of our clients.

Through the United Way Halifax Region's *Days of Caring* Program, CCL provided playground equipment for the many children who live in Alice Housing.

Foundation Support –

Alice Housing is grateful to the following foundations that provided much needed funding and support: Scotiabank, BMO Fountain of Hope Employees Foundation, Flemming Charitable Foundation, and Sisters of Charity

Special Events –

On November 20, 2003 Alice Housing celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a fundraising dinner and silent auction at the Lord Nelson Hotel with guest, Dr. Linda Carvery, who provided entertainment during what turned out to be an intimate evening without power. We are grateful to those who supported Alice Housing by attending our Anniversary Dinner or donated silent auction items. Sponsors of this event were Daily News, Print Atlantic, and Trivium Design.

Over the past four years, Alice Housing has received tremendous support from over 40 regional women artists for Alice Housing's Annual ArtWorks Auction. Local artists donated works of art and you, our supporters, attended this event and purchased wonderful art pieces. Over the past four years approximately \$40,000 has been raised through this fundraising event. This year Alice Housing produced the 2004 Calendar of Hope featuring 12 artists who have supported our work over the past four years. The Calendar of Hope was dedicated to the memory of Ellen Vinci who died on September 29, 2003.

Thank you to the many individuals and businesses that provided calendar prizes.

Third Party Fundraising –

Third Party Fundraising initiatives provided important monies for programs and other services and community awareness. Alice Housing supports community efforts and is always ready to attend and support *Third Party Fundraising* events.

Special thanks to the *Futura Club, Bust Out Productions, Beta Sigma Phi, Mom's to Mom's, Dorlene, Zellers of Canada, Lindor, Merrick Holm Barristers & Solicitors, Dalhousie Women's Centre, Queen Elizabeth High School, St. James United Church, and Grace Chapel*. For the past 11 years" *Mom's to Mom's* – a volunteer group of over 200 individuals – has provided wonderful Christmas bags for women. For the past 14 years' Grace Chapel has organized and held a fabulous Christmas party with very special gifts for all women and children.

Alice News –

During the year Alice Housing published two newsletters. The newsletters are also on our website at www.alicehousing.ca. Thank you to Keane Canada who has donated their services to maintain and update our website on a regular basis.

Over the past year Alice Housing is again overwhelmed with the tremendous support that has been demonstrated by individuals, groups, and businesses. You have shown that you truly care!

Respectfully submitted by
Marilyn Berry
Fund Development Coordinator

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee was active this year in discussing the establishment of reserves. The Committee's recommendations were approved by the Board of Director's and as such the Capital Reserve was established to cover the repairs and capital cost replacements for Unit C and Duplex's 1 & 2. Previously there had been no reserve in place for these two buildings (Unit C was purchased in the Fall of 2003) as the Replacement Reserve is a required CMHC agreement and covers only Unit A and Unit B. In keeping with looking toward the future needs of the agency, the Board also established the Operations Reserve to cover any emergencies in the operations of Alice Housing such as loss of core funding.

In discussing our capital assets it was noted that our accounting policies did not include the amortization of equipment in our 22 units. Items such as washers, dryers, fridges, stoves, oil tanks, etc. As a result we made a change in our accounting policy to include future amortization and recorded a writedown of our assets in the amount of \$34,277

Despite our efforts to defray rental revenue loss this year we still experienced a deficit on our safe housing properties. This is an ongoing struggle for Alice Housing, as costs such as heat, power and general maintenance increase, while the families we serve remain on limited fixed incomes. Numerous women require subsidization if they are employed in low wage paying jobs and the provincial subsidy we receive does not cover the entire loss of budgeted rent for the year. Therefore donations are imperative for both the existence of services, and so that families who require our safe housing, but cannot afford what is already an affordable housing rate, can remain in our apartments and our program.

This year, thanks to the *Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative*, we were able to purchase a building with 5 new safe housing units for women under the age of 30, bringing our total to 22 second stage housing units. This building accommodates for both single women and women with children. In partnership with the Board of Director's , our Executive Director, Angela Power, and her staff continue to enhance financial management so that we can maintain the high quality of our services and implement additional programming as the needs of the women and children we serve increases. Ultimately our role is to provide safety no matter what the cost. This includes security systems in every unit, installing high quality locks and providing two cell phones so that staff who are frequently on-site at the units are able to call for assistance immediately.

Respectfully submitted,
Kelly Walker
Treasurer

Alice Housing would like to thank the following for their support:

Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation
Christ Church ACW
Sisters of Charity, Halifax
St. Andrews ACW
St. Andrew's Church
St. Andrew's CWL
Atlantic Tractors & Equipment Ltd.
Nova Scotia Dept. of Housing & Municipal Affairs
Alice Housing's Christmas Angels
Zellers Inc. Mic Mac Mall – Friends of the Family Program
Zellers Inc. Cole Harbour – Friends of the Family Program
Merrick Holm Barristers & Solicitors
Royal LePage Relocation Services
Dorlene
Bust Out Productions
Halifax Civic Credit Union
Human Resources Development Canada, (SCPI)
Grace Chapel
Bedford United Church
Grace United Church
Lindor
Scotiabank
BMO Foundation of Hope – Employees Foundation
St. James United Church

Salsman Investment Limited
United Way Halifax Region
Nova Scotia Dept. of Community Services
Halifax Regional Municipality
Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority
Alliance Security Systems
Flemming Charitable Foundation
Quantum Communications
The Daily News
Futura Club
Dalhousie Women's Centre
Queen Elizabeth High School
Beta Sigma Phi
Metro Food Bank
Keane Canada
Lake Echo Lioness
TD Canada Trust, Portland Street
The Lord Nelson Hotel & Suites
Print Atlantic
Trivium Design
Moms to Moms
Bank of Montreal
RBC Royal Bank

To protect privacy, we do not list donations made by individuals. If we have excluded anyone from this list please know that your kindness has not been forgotten.

Alice Housing would also like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported us through in-kind and monetary donations and by participating in our various fundraisers.