



FERNIE
WOMEN'S RESOURCE
CENTRE

2025- 2026 ANNUAL REPORT





Our Vision

The Fernie Women's Resource Centre will strive for equality and justice for all women and work for the removal of barriers to women's full economic, social, cultural, legal, and political participation.

Who we are

We have been a proud part of the Elk Valley since 1979. We aim to raise the status of women, act as a referral and drop-in centre, offer support to women and their families, and inform and educate the public around issues concerning women.

Land Statement

We are honoured to live and work on the unceded homelands of Yaqítʔa·knuqʔiit First Nation and the Ktunaxa speaking people of BC, Montana, and Idaho

Message from our Executive Director



I am so thrilled to share the 2025–2026 Annual Report for the Fernie Women's Resource Centre. This was another incredible year of compassionate, dedicated, trauma-informed work from our entire team.

This year we have all had to deal with complicated challenges across our community, province, country and the globe. Financial challenges that we can all relate to, whether it be increasing costs, stalling funding, and hiring freezes, or more complicated issues like witnessing devastating forest fires, the degradation of women's rights, genocide and other atrocities across the globe. It can all seem very overwhelming! But, what do we do when the world seems scary? We look to each other! I am so grateful to be surrounded by such incredible women whom I get to work along side and support. Community is the only way through challenging times, we must ensure that we are caring for each other and supporting one another's strengths and differences. When we all shoulder each other, the load isn't so heavy.

As you will read in this report you will come to see the hard work our teams have been putting into the Elk Valley. Whether it be our Early Years Team providing education, support, giggles, and fun to our littlest neighbours and their caregivers, or the Gender-Based Violence team helping survivors of violence heal and grow from abuse perpetrated against them, our front-line workers have had another year of providing excellent, client-centred programming. Can't forget about our incredible administrative team for holding it all together!

Our Board had an exciting year as well. This year's International Women's Day Celebration was bigger than ever! It was a week long event celebrating all the amazing, talented, artistic women in our community! Every event was sold out and we were so honoured to be able to share our message with the community with the help of the Fernie and District Arts Council. As always, I have to take some time to thank our supporters! Whether you have donated your time to an event, your gently used household items, toys and gifts for the holidays, hard earned cash, or shared our posts on social media, you mean everything to us! We couldn't do the work we do without the generosity of our community!

In Solidarity,
Nicky Benzie, Executive Director

Our Programs



COUNSELLING

Counselling provides a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment for women, trans women, and non-binary folks who have experienced abuse, violence, or trauma and all genders of people who have experienced any form of sexual abuse or assault.

These programs are:

- Sexual Assault Services
- Gender Based Violence



OUTREACH

The Outreach program helps women, trans women, and non-binary folks with one-on-one support like safety planning, referrals to other services, legal and government support, and emergency financial support. These programs are:

- Stopping the Violence Outreach
- Sexual Assault Services Coordination



PARENT SUPPORT

Parent Support includes drop-in and one-to-one support and education for parents from when they are expecting all the way through teenage years. These programs are:

- Bellies to Babies
- Juice Box Social
- Family Connections
- Farmer's Market Coupon Program (available to families and seniors)



EARLY YEARS

The Early Years Team is a group of service providers and community members that share info, spot community needs, and work to make sure families get the best early years services.

These programs are:

- South Country Preschool
- Fernie and Sparwood Early Years Team
- Parent-Tot Funtimes



Our Team & Board

10

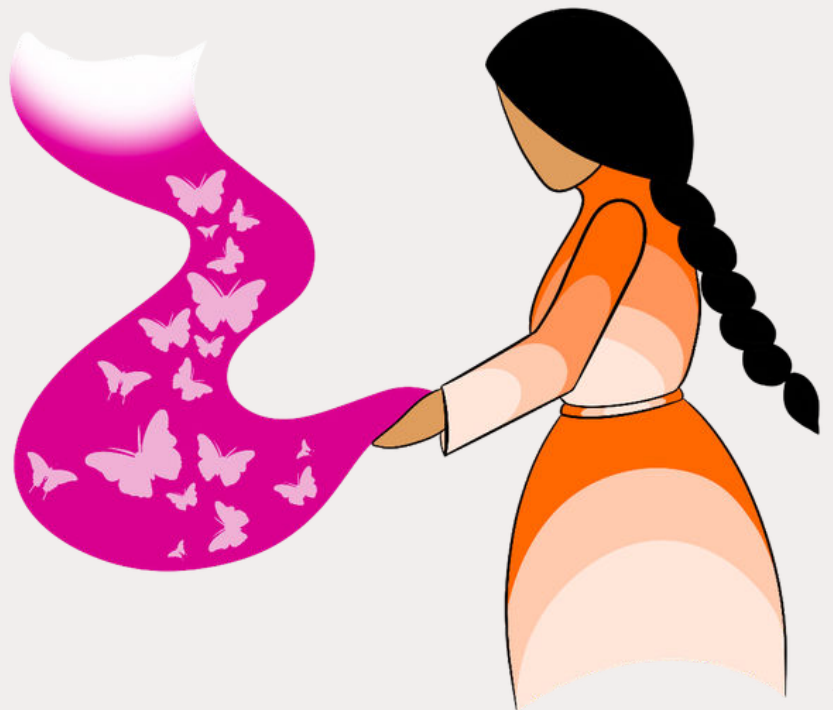
board members

Our Board Members Are

- Ann Kamp
- Becca Wintrip
- Wendy Anderson
- Simone Aloe
- Katie Hobbes
- Kerrie Kelleher
- Shannon Ross
- Janet Martin
- Karen Tse
- Jessica McCullough

20

**part time and full
time employees**



Fundraising Events



Each year, we host a number of events to bring awareness to our services, raise funds, and share resources



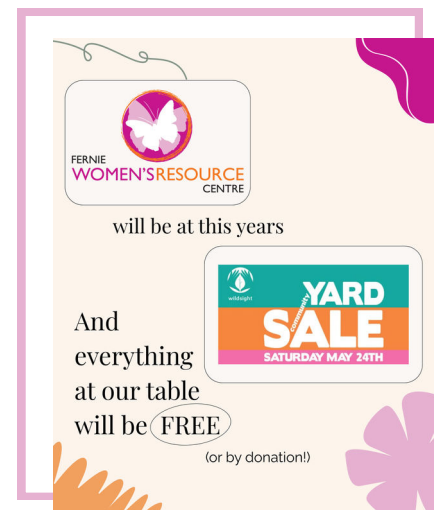
Annual Holiday Toy Drive

In November and December, FWRC provides gift cards and gifts to families in need so that there's always something to unwrap on Christmas morning. This year, we supported:

- 74 families
- 171 children
- \$3,350 in grocery support

Community Yard Sale

Thanks to the incredible support of our community, we were able to collect enough donations to take part of the Fernie Yard Sale. To support our clients and the community as a whole, everything at the booth was free or by donation. Many families were able to take part in the yard sale at low or no cost, and we raised \$500 towards our Emergency Fund.



International Women's Week!

Our International Women's Day celebration grows and grows! This year, our hearts were warmed – we had a busy week of events and workshops which were fully sold out! We always provide low-cost and free events, as well as a number of complimentary tickets for women's centre clients



Program Highlights

Support Funds



\$18,145

went to 118 women and families through our **Emergency Fund**



\$2,550

helped 13 women and families secure safe through our **Safe Housing Fund**, assisting with damage deposits, utility bills, and rent supports



\$41,054

raised in donations this year for various other client supports

Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program

105



Households were provided with 13 weeks of coupons. Of those households there were:

127 children

7 pregnant folk

36 seniors

12 Indigenous people

Each household on the wait list received at least one week of coupons

Program Highlights

Outreach – Gender Based Violence



159 clients were seen across both the Sexual Assault Services and Stopping the Violence Outreach programs

Comfort Kits

The program reintroduced comfort kits for clients who are in the hospital. The kits include: **fresh change of comfy clothes, toiletries, phone chargers, grooming supplies, and a journal**

Trainings and Professional Development



Our coordinator attended the **Law Foundation of BC's provincial training**, to better understand and support clients through the legal system



We hosted **several trainings** for community groups like Interior Health, Fernie Secondary, and The Pub at Park Place Lodge. Trainings include **responding to disclosures of sexual violence and safety in relationships**



SAFETY DANCE

We hosted a 'Safety Dance' to provide the community with resources and supplies for a safe night out. Community partner such as ANKORS, Options Clinic, The Transition Unit, and Fernie Pride joined to share information and raise awareness. And of course, we danced the night away

Program Highlights

Gender Based Violence

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES COUNSELLING

The program supports any individuals in the Elk Valley who have experienced sexual assault at any point in their life. This program is offered to **all genders** of survivors.

- This year, we provided services to **31 women over 168 individual sessions**
- We continued the **Women's Social**, facilitated by our Sexual Assault Services Counsellor, a place for women to connect, share stories, and support one another

STOPPING THE VIOLENCE COUNSELLING

The program supports women, trans women, and non-binary people who have faced abuse or violence in their lifetime with at least 12 free counselling sessions.

- This year, we provided services to **72 people across a total of 328 sessions**
- The counsellor and Stopping the Violence Outreach coordinator facilitated and **Art Therapy Group in Sparwood** which transitioned into a Creative Journalling Group. This group also hosted a session during our International Women's Day Celebration



Art Therapy/Journaling Group

A creative space to slow down, experiment with art supplies, connect, eat snacks and explore journaling as a grounding tool. We strive to meet the needs of our clients across the Elk Valley, bringing Sparwood residents an opportunity to connect and create community

Program Highlights

Parent Support Programs



Juice Box Social

For families with babies up to 2 years that includes fun music time and a chance for grown-ups to make parent friends in community. This program transitioned from weekly to once a month, and continually sees 20-45 people and 15+ families including parents, grandparents, and nannies!



The program is like a big family wedding; busy, a bit messy, social, and has a truly down home vibe where all are welcome. We are very proud of this program and believe it has significant impact on the families involved

-Anie & Jodie, Juice Box Social Program Coordinators



Parent Connections

A program for parents with children of any age to discuss parenting topics, hear from guest speakers, and have an open space to talk about the good and tough parts of being a parent. The program saw anywhere from 1 to 15 adults and 2 to 23 children per session. The program also moved to the Strong Start room at EIDES and introduced a child minder, which has been an incredible addition.



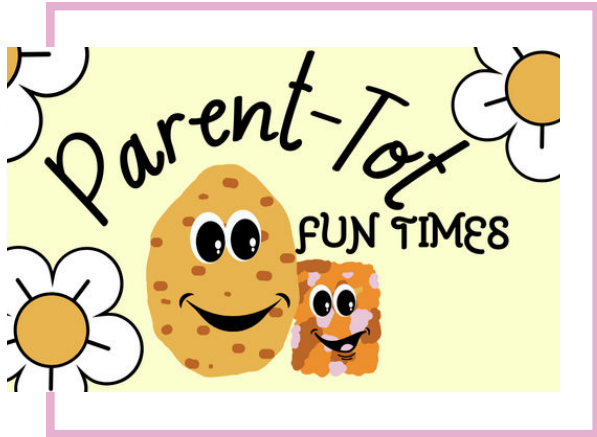
Program Highlights

Early Years Programs



Early Years Team

This team coordinates a monthly round table of Early Years professionals where updates are shared about what's happening in the community, partner on various projects, and spread word in the community. We also host the **Fernie Early Years and Sparwood Early Years Facebook groups**, a one stop shop for all early years programming happening in both communities!

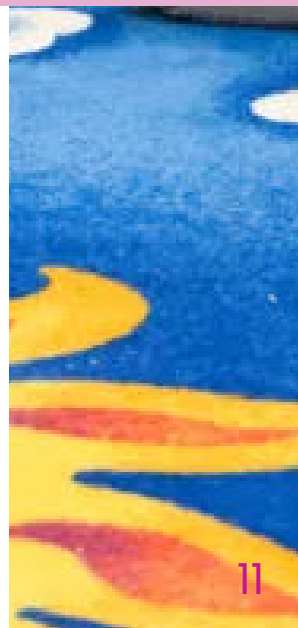


Parent Tot Funtimes

A free drop-in program for families with kids aged 0-6 helping families connect and giving kids a chance to learn early through song, toys, stories and crafts. The program sees **20 kids and 15 parents a week in Fernie, 12 kids and 8 parents in Sparwood, and 4 kids and 3 parents in Elkford**. They also added a water sensory table and it has been a hit!

South Country Preschool

Located in the portable outside the gym at Jaffray Elementary, with classes for 3 & 4 year olds who can learn and grow. This is the only program we facilitate that has a cost associated to it. **This year the preschool has 26 students in total**. They also improved their outdoor play space, allowing kids to play and providing the program safe toy storage options.



Program Highlights

Bellies to Babies



Each year, the popularity of our Bellies to Babies Program continues to grow. We supported **178 parents and pregnant people** through Bellies to Babies in 2025 and 2026.

Drop-In Program

Bellies to Babies hosted **41 drop ins averaging 13 moms, 12 babies, and one support system person per drop in.** Drop ins feature:

- Community Walks and Pool Days
- Training opportunities like infant CPR
- Healthy lunches and community connections

Breastfeeding Support

Our Lactation Nurse provided breastfeeding support for **35 families outside of drop-ins**, and provided an average of **2 breastfeeding consultations per drop-in session**

Family Support

Our Family Support worker provided home visits, mental health support, and referrals to **17 individuals**. She also supported **25 families with consistent \$100 monthly food vouchers**.



Bellies to Babies was truly a lifeline for me during some of the hardest months of my motherhood journey. Jodie and Sue are incredible leaders and community builders - they...created a space where I felt genuinely seen and cared for

-Bellies to Babies Graduate





Thank You!

The Fernie Women's Research Centre could not provide the support we do without generous donations from our community. You make as great an impact as we do.



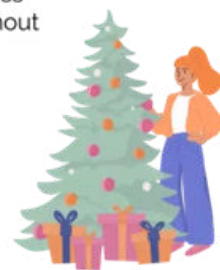
Emergency Support Fund

Women can access a small amount of funding if they are unable to find financial support elsewhere to help them get through a crisis. In many cases this program is ensuring women's basic needs of safety, food, shelter, and medical care are being met. This program provides women with the support to continue to move forward with their life.



This can be an incredibly stressful time of year for families. There are extra financial pressures and expectations that come with the holidays. Every year we support families in need with access to food and gifts for their children. Annually 80-100 families access this program throughout the Elk Valley.

Holiday Support



Diapers and Formula



Help families with these high cost, critical items for their children.

Safe Housing Fund



Safe housing is critical to our well-being. Donations to this fund support women who are needing financial assistance with securing a safe place to live.

Consider becoming a monthly donor!

Your contributions can help a community member buy groceries, secure housing, get them to medical appointment, and support them when they need it most

ferniewomenscentre.com/donate





Stay Connected

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