

ANNUAL REPORT 24'-25'

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

*Presented to the General
Assembly on June 19th 2025*

***“Your support can help
children like him to come out
of the darkness.”***

***Chris-Ann Nakis, President of the
Shield of Athéna***

Trapped in the Violence shows the heartbreaking reality of a child caught in fear and confusion. In the drawing, he depicts himself lost in darkness, wounded and alone — a silent cry for safety, hope, and healing.



BOUCLIER D'ATHÉNA
SHIELD OF ATHÉNA
SERVICES FAMILIAUX | FAMILY SERVICES

SHELTE
FAN'M.

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THANK YOU

Dear friends,

We speak again about what has been going on within our network.

The organization has been supervising two construction sites , one for the past five years, and the other, at our emergency shelter for the past year. All while the needs of the organization have become more and more pressing and more daunting in nature.

Violence remains a persistent issue, requiring vigilance and proactive measures in prevention, education, specialized intervention, and the provision of support services for vulnerable women and children. In the 35 years of our existence it has been our vision to eradicate this type of violence.

It is so important to be able to say that we have the community support we need to go ahead with our vision and we thank you all for this.

Interesting developments within this period have been, on the one hand, the addition of our fourth point of service, our second step and, on the other ,the revitalizing of our existing shelter.

Quite simply, we had to increase the space for victims of violence, it was the time and even though all finances were not quite there, we took the decision to do this.

In addition to this , the development of specialized services in our Laval Project , where we will work with all of the main collaborators in the field of conjugal violence including the shelters in Laval; coupled with the long term development of our Multilingual Legal Clinic make this such an exciting period for us!

Again, after a very turbulent and labor intensive year at the Shield we would like to thank you all for your support towards eradicating violence against women.

Thank you for your solidarity.



Melpa Kamateros; Executive Director
Shield of Athena Family Services



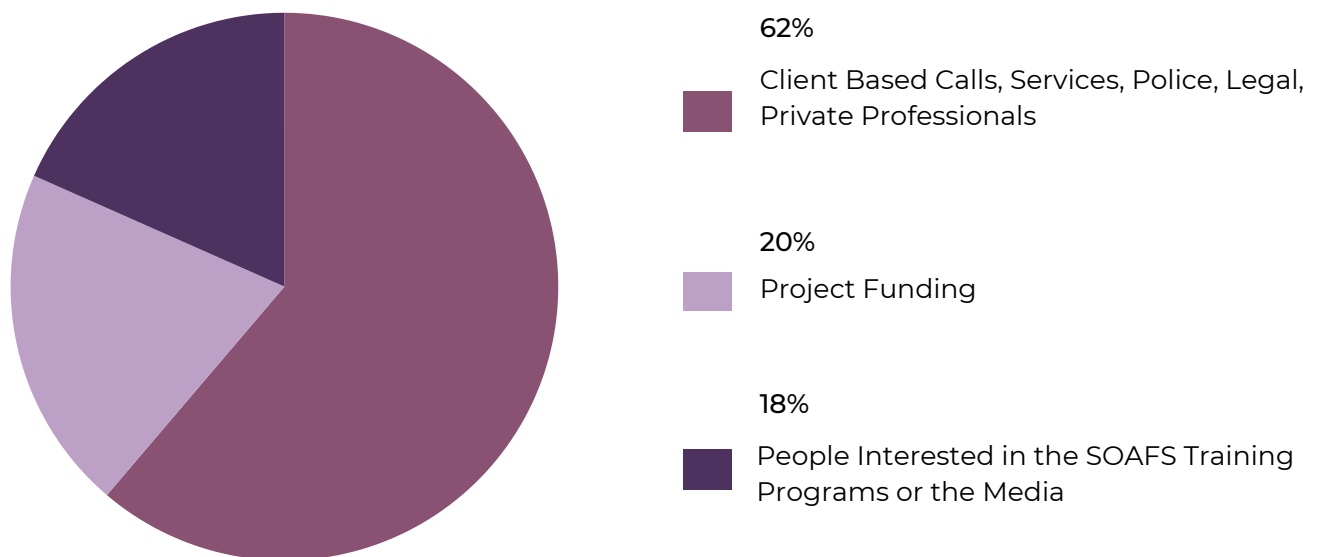
Chris Ann Nakis; President
Shield of Athena Family Services

OVERVIEW

Calls received by our services for the last statistical period

The total number of calls made and received at the Montreal and Laval offices last year was **18,195**.

From this number, 62% were client based calls for services or activities made by existing social and health services, community organizations, the police, other resources, and private sector professionals. Calls received from other organizations or the media requesting information about BASF's training programs or projects account for 18%. Lastly, calls related to government matters such as project funding, donations, events, and fundraising initiatives, represented 20% of the total.



Call From Clients at the External

In total, **1,629 calls came from 389 clients** who contacted us directly or were primarily referred to us by health and social services, as well as by SOS violence conjugale.

From these calls the languages spoken were:

- English: 32%
- French: 22%
- Other: 46%

One in two clients who made these calls or were referred to our external offices in Montréal or Laval speak only their native language. Our multilingual cultural intermediaries (hereinafter “CIs”) handle these cases.

Area

According to the information collected on 1,059 of these calls, 35% originated from Laval, with the remaining calls coming from Montréal. The distribution is as follows:

- 17 %: Ahuntsic, Saint-Laurent, Cartierville
- 2%: Montréal-Est
- 33 %: Parc-Extension
- 10%: Côte-des-Neiges
- 7%: Outremont, Mile End, Plateau Mont-Royal
- 20%: Verdun, Lasalle, Lachine
- 5 %: Ouest-de-l'Île
- 6 %: Rive-Sud

Observation: Over 30% of the calls were made from park Extension where the organization has been located from 1991.

Client Services

Total Number of Clients

During the most recent statistical period, **1,412 cases**, both new and old, short- and long-term, used our external services in Montreal and Laval. Of these, **1,255 were short-term** cases and **157 were long-term**. Due to the increased demand for our specialized services and a four-week waiting period, we were forced to reduce the number of clients served compared to previous periods.

Short-Term Cases

Of the 1,255 short-term cases, 96% involved situations of violence for which no official file was opened, despite active listening, referrals, and interventions by our staff. This is primarily due to the fact that the majority of the clients we work with are often immigrant women or women with limited access to resources, little support, and significant language barriers. The remaining 4% of cases mainly involved issues related to access.

Among clients with a short-term case file, 50% reported their age. Of those, 40% were between the ages of 20 and 39, 26% were between 40 and 49, and 34% were aged 50 and over.

Long-Term Cases

The total number of long-term cases is 157, including those of both new and returning clients.

This year's analysis will focus on data drawn from 88 new long-term cases and 69 cases from the previous fiscal year.

New Long-Term Client Profile (Based on 88 Cases)

Who uses our services? According to our statistics:

- 100% are women, and 69% of them are from diverse ethnic backgrounds;
- The largest age group of **long-term clients**, clients at our external service centers is 19–39 years old, representing 47%. Clients aged 40–49 make up 36%, and 17% are aged 50 and over;
- 74% of them live in Montreal, while 26% reside in Laval;
- 22% use French, 32% use English, and 46% communicate in languages other than French or English;
- All 88 new clients are victims of domestic violence. Among them, 95% experienced intimate partner violence, while 5% were cases of family violence;
- For 46% of these clients, their preferred language of communication is their mother tongue. They received linguistically specialized and culturally appropriate services from our staff at the Montréal and Laval external service centers;

The languages spoken by our cultural intermediaries and social workers include: Arabic, Bengali, Armenian, English, Farsi, French, Greek, Gujaratti, Hindi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Mandarin, Tamil, and Urdu.

Areas Clients Come from (Based on 88 New Cases)

74% of our clients live in Montréal and its surrounding suburbs.

37% come from multicultural neighborhoods such as Parc-Extension, Villeray, and Saint-Michel (7%); Ville Saint-Laurent and Ahuntsic (10%); Côte-des-Neiges and NDG (15%); and Mile End and the Plateau (5%). Another 7% come from East Montréal, and 15% are from LaSalle, Verdun, East Lachine, Saint-Henri; 6% are from the North Shore (other than Laval). 4% are from the Southwest, Downtown, Rosemont, and Saint-Léonard. 5% come from Montréal-Nord. 26% of clients live in Laval.

Referral Sources

This year, 70% of our referrals come from SOS Violence Conjugale and the existing social services network, including the Director of Youth Protection (hereinafter “DYP”), hospitals, and Integrated University Health and Social Services Centers (hereinafter “CIUSSS”). 18% percent originate from word of mouth, other clients, and community members who speak their own language. 1% are follow-ups from the House of Athena after clients’ stays at the shelter. 6% percent come from other community organizations and legal referrals. 5% come from the Bouclier d’Athéna website.

Observation: Our community work after the pandemic has resulted in many mouth to ear referrals for women who are vulnerable and cannot access information on resources otherwise.

New Long-Term Clients (Based on 88 Cases)

This year, the number of new long-term cases is 88. We wish to emphasize that we have closed some cases from previous periods to accommodate new clients, prioritize more recent and high risk cases, reduce waiting lists, and ensure that all clients can access our services. We also want to highlight the need for additional staff to meet the high demand.

shelter previous Residents

The case load is different at the external and few ex-residents come.

This year, Athena's House referred a former resident to our external services following their stay at the shelter.

Services Provided (Based on 157 New Long-Term Cases, Including New and Existing Clients)

During the last statistical period, social workers, counselors, and child intervention specialists provided 3,118 services to clients with long-term cases.

During this period, our social workers supported long-term clients facing various challenges, including language barriers and complex issues requiring specialized services and a multi-sectoral approach. In addition to psychosocial intervention, our clients needed assistance navigating immigration, criminal, and civil procedures. Advocacy was also a key component of the multilingual services offered by our counselors and social workers.

Type	2024-2025
Advocacy	1000
Individual Consultations	467
Financial Assistance	214
Legal Aid	49
Accompaniment with a Social Worker	77
Family	9
Services for Children	77
Telephone	1016
Referrals	153
Support Groups / Interventions	56
Total	3118

Observation: All services are personalized to meet the specific linguistic and cultural needs of clients by social workers and Shield of Athena staff at our Montreal and Laval offices. Due to staff shortages, clients have had to wait 3 to 4 weeks to access our services.

This year, the languages used include Arabic, Bengali, Tamoul, Farsi, Greek, Hindi, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Mandarin, Armenian, and Urdu. Please note that some services for children were also offered in Spanish and Farsi.

Specialized Services - Empowerment Groups

English language support group:

- Held in February/March 2025;
- 4 women participated ;
- All are of English origin;
- A total of 5 sessions;
- All sessions were conducted by Betty Petropoulos, social worker, and Maria Papadopoulos, social worker.

French language support group:

- Held in September 2024;
- 5 women participated;
- A total of 5 sessions;
- All sessions were conducted by Judith Vernus , case worker.

Empowerment groups in urdu/punjabi languages:

- Held in February 2025;
- 6 women participated;
- A total of 4 sessions;
- All sessions were conducted by Emily D'Errico, case worker, and Farrah Naz Malik, cultural intermediary (CI). Since the sessions were held virtually, 3 women from Montréal and 3 women residing in our shelter participated.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND MOTHERS EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE

Victims of violence who have children face additional challenges after separating from their abusive partners. At the Shield of Athena, mothers have the opportunity to learn about the impact of violence on children and to acquire important skills for effecting a healthy parent-child dynamic. Furthermore, the most effective way to help children exposed to violence is to position parents as partners in the therapeutic process.

Under a provision of the *Civil Code of Québec* that came into effect in May 2023, mothers who have experienced conjugal, family, or sexual violence may consent to services for their children after receiving a certificate from an authorized official and do not need the authority of the father.

From April 2024 to March 31st 2025, 12 mothers and 6 children received services provided by Francesca Esguerra, MA, DT (Drama therapist).

At the external centers, Montreal & Laval

A total of 173 interventions were provided to mothers and children:

- 70 individual consultations with mothers;
- 77 youth consultations;
- 4 family drama therapy sessions;
- 22 phone calls

cultural intermediary were used in 22 sessions, allowing for services to be rendered in Spanish and in Farsi.



Play therapy session set-up

CULTURAL SERVICE (CI)

INTERMEDIARY

For women victims of conjugal violence who speak only in their language of origin.

In addition to the presence of our multilingual social workers and intervention staff, we also offer language-specific services tailored to the needs of allophone women who are victims of conjugal and family violence through our Cultural Intermediaries (CIs). This service was established in 2008 and designed to help victims from diverse ethnocultural communities better access existing resources. The Cultural Intermediaries speak, read, and write in at least one additional language and also participate in community outreach and awareness-raising sessions.

Role of the Cultural Intermediaries (CI)

CIs play a fundamental role in supporting women victims throughout the socio-judicial process. Whether it's with the police, in court, or when accessing social assistance programs, CIs are there to support them. Their main mandate is to assist women during interactions with social workers by providing essential cultural and linguistic context. Their presence makes the process far less intimidating, allowing women to build trust with both the intervention worker and the CI. Victims feel less isolated, as someone from their own cultural background and origin accompanies them through the various stages of the health and legal systems

All CIs are continuously supervised and receive ongoing training on domestic and family violence. Although the majority of services are provided by social workers, CIs work in close collaboration with them. This partnership ensures consistent follow-up for women using external services, as well as for former residents of the Maison d'Athéna.

The intervention used follows a tripartite approach, based on collaborative work between the social worker, the cultural intermediary, and the client. While this method is extremely effective, it requires two to three times more time than a standard intervention.

The cultural intermediaries also provide a permanent telephone access service for several hours each week to assist callers who speak neither French nor English. They translate informational and awareness materials intended for the public, produced by Bouclier d'Athéna, and participate in information sessions when necessary..

A total of **197 women** from diverse cultural backgrounds, both new and former clients with long-term and short-term cases, benefited from the services of our cultural intermediaries during this statistical period, representing an increase of **8.84%** compared to the previous period.

These figures include clients from the House of Athena, former residents, and clients of external services, both long-term and short-term, who have used services offered within our network.

A total of **2,309** interventions were carried out in 10 different languages: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali,, Spanish, Farsi, Punjabi, Russian, Urdu, to which we added **Tamil**, and **Mandarin**. Please note that we also deal with Afghani clients who speak Farsi.

Laval Project

MSSS, Call for proposals for projects: for a better response to the needs of victims of sexual and domestic violence

This year, due to a program received from the MSSS, we expanded the CI services in Laval so as to promote an intersectoral approach with all the major service providers for victims of conjugal violence. Through this program we will be able to provide multilingual screening and other services to DYP, CAVAC, Urgences social and the police of Laval, the three shelters, the correctional services and CPIVAS. We will also be able to follow up victims in various legal and psychosocial procedures.

Thanks to this funding, the Shield of Athena has been able to expand its linguistically adapted services for women victims of intimate partner violence, family violence, and honor-based violence.

We are convinced that **linguistic assistance is essential** to better understand and support these vulnerable women on their path to safety and autonomy. Our services are accessible to shelters, the Youth Protection Directorate (DPJ), Victim Support Centers (CAVAC), and Laval police services.

Services Offered Across the CI Program : 2024- 2025

	Arabic	Armenian	Bengali	Dari	Spanish	Farsi	Mandarin	Punjabi	Russian	Tamil	Urdu	Total
# of women	26	1	28	1	56	16	8	25	9	2	25	197
Consultations	34	2	16		54	10	12	25	6		17	176
Virtual Consultations	2		17		5	1	2	4		4	5	40
Phone Consultations	86	3	42		80	26	39	100	34		147	557
Accompaniments	3		11		2				2			18
Phone and Virtual Accompaniments	2		1					9			9	21
Phone Calls	39	3	274		94	5	56	26	15		54	566
Listening / Information / Referral	109	1	386	1	73	20		83	16		116	805
Financial Assistance	3		17					6	2		6	34
Individual Legal Clinic	3	1	10				3	3	1		2	23
Complementary Intervention	22		27					7	1		12	69
Total	303	10	801	1	308	62	112	263	77	4	368	2309

The adapted linguistic service provided by our cultural intermediaries (CIs) is also available upon request to other shelters, either via videoconference or in person, when language barriers arise during an intervention. Access to this service is coordinated by Hasmik Manucharyan, coordinator of Shield of Athena Family Services (BASF).

Observation: In addition to the new project and the amplification of the services in Laval, we have hired additional cultural intermediaries to meet the growing demand.

LEGAL CLINIC



Me Caren Naccour and one of the Shield of Athena's legal intern

The Shield of Athena's legal clinic is dedicated to making justice more accessible for women who are victims of domestic violence, family violence, and honour-based violence.

At the heart of the clinic, we conduct legal information consultations with our clients, responding to their questions when they do not have a lawyer or when there is significant misunderstanding despite the presence of legal representation. This service is paired with that of cultural intermediaries.

This tripartite approach—client, lawyer/law student, and cultural intermediary—broadens the reach of legal services in Quebec and addresses the specific needs of women who are victims of violence. The caseworkers involved are also included in the legal process, ensuring comprehensive support.

The clinic is made up of a supervising lawyer, Me Caren Naccour, as well as law students from the Université de Montréal and McGill University, as part of their legal studies. During their internship, the students carry out the following tasks:

- Support with Me Naccour during consultations, and when ready, the students conduct the consultations themselves (under the supervision of the lawyer);
- Facilitation of sessions, webinars, or awareness and informational presentations on various areas of law (family, immigration, criminal, youth, etc.), where they answer women's legal questions following a general presentation of the law;
- Research, whether specific or general—for example, on concepts such as parental alienation, particular questions raised by our clients during consultations, or questions from social workers and caseworkers. In the latter case, the information provided to social workers and caseworkers would be relayed to their clients, as this information would not require full intervention by the clinic.

During the last reporting period, 44 individual consultations were conducted, including:

- 44 with the lawyer present;
- 31 with student(s) present;
- 32 conducted in languages other than English or French, namely Punjabi, Bengali, Arabic, Mandarin, Urdu, Farsi, Russian, and Spanish.

Five legal presentations were given, covering the following topics:

- Answering various legal questions from clients (across all areas of law), delivered in English and translated into Bengali, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. This presentation was offered to both new and returning clients of BASF;
- Criminal justice process, delivered in English and translated into Bengali, Urdu, Punjabi, and Hindi. This presentation was offered to both new and returning clients of BASF;
- Demystifying different immigration statuses, delivered in English and translated into Farsi. This presentation was offered to the Iranian community;
- Specifics of marriage (2 presentations): family property and matrimonial regimes, delivered in French.

The legal clinic represents a crucial link in the psychosocial support of women victims. The Shield works to help them regain their independence, including judicial independence. It is through this legal clinic, supported by the cultural intermediary service, that the Shield ensures comprehensive and optimal follow-up, fostering the expected autonomy in the victims' empowerment process.

LINGUISTICALLY SPECIALIZED SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

This year, numerous specialised activities focussed on conjugal and family violence were also organized for women and children in Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Urdu, and Punjabi:

- Dinner-and-movie event during which participants discussed domestic violence after watching a film: April 2024;
- Friendship activity for women: August 2024;
- Three legal sessions covering separation and divorce, immigration and sponsorship, criminal procedure: October 2024;
- Two creative activities: September 2024;
- Two sessions on "How to traverse the medical system in Quebec" and "Recognizing mental health issues related to intimate partner violence": November and December 2024;
- Activity for Mother's Day: May 2024;
- "Love is not always tender": February 2025;
- Art activity for International Women's Day: March 2025.

A total of 171 clients participated in these sessions.

MULTILINGUAL OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS

Throughout the year, the Shield of Athena produces campaigns, such as our annual "Love is not Always Kind" campaign, and "Raise a Hand to Say no to Violence" to raise awareness about conjugal and family violence. These are produced in multiple languages so as to reach as many people as possible.



Posts from the "Love is not Always Kind" campaign

COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND INTERNS

McGill University Faculty of Medicine – Community Health Partnership Project (CHAP)

Four medical students from McGill University, participating in the Community Health Alliance Project (CHAP), offered virtual presentations. These sessions were specially designed for our clients at the external office and those in our shelter. The presentations covered two topics:

- How to navigate Quebec's health care system: A practical guide to help our clients better understand and use the health services available in Quebec.
- Recognizing mental health issues related to intimate partner violence: A sensitive and informative approach to identify signs of psychological distress linked to intimate partner violence and to know where to find help.

McGill University - Faculty of Law and Social Work

From 1998, students from McGill law and social work have done their internships with us.

Université de Montréal - Law and Social Work

We also host law and social work students from the Université de Montréal who are completing their internships within our organization, focusing on issues related to legal proceedings, particularly in the areas of family law, criminal law, youth protection, and immigration. Among their responsibilities, they also lead information sessions for our clients.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE MONTREAL OFFICE

The Hellenic Appeal Foundation – Distribution of food baskets (December 2024)

Over a two-day period, volunteers divided and distributed Christmas baskets worth \$250 each to 100 families. Additionally, 20 other clients received checks worth \$125 per family from the Gazette's Christmas Fund. This initiative has taken place since 2010.

Easter - April 2024

Easter baskets were distributed to 80 families by the Hellenic Call Foundation.

The activity was coordinated by Betty Petropoulos, social worker and director of social services, and Maria Papadopoulos, social worker and clinical supervisor..

Other

Clients received new clothing donated by Suzy Shier and Alison Sheri. Young children received toys provided by Ginger Petty's Annual Toy Tea. Many gift cards from local restaurants and businesses were offered for teenagers.

Clients also received gifts for themselves, as well as toys and gift cards for teenagers, thanks to Caroline Bouchard and a team of volunteers, including volunteers from City Church.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This year, many individuals, groups, foundations, and businesses have offered their support to the Shield of Athena, and we sincerely thank them for their generosity.

Some of these donors were:

- Altru Foundation
- Fondation Azrieli
- CN Rail
- M. Stephen Segal et famille
- Académie Étoile du Nord Laval
- The Montreal Knights Hockey Academy
- Carolyn's Toy Drive
- Opération Père Noël
- Girls hockey espoir
- Glencore Canada
- SHOEBOX
- La Fondation d'Appel hellénique
- Lyceum of Greek Women
- Fondation Bombardier Royal LePage
- Banque Scotia
- Meraki Boutique



Donation from Stella Tsarnas



Our Shelter Coordinator Maria, with employees from La Vie en Rose



Our Executive Director, Melpa Kamateros, with the Royal Lepage team, and their generous donation.



Donations from Carolyn's Community for the women and children at the shelter.



We had the chance this year to receive beautiful gifts from Armenian Diocese of Canada



Maraki Boutique sale for the Shield of Athena.

SPECIAL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

2024 Lilac Gala

A wonderful event that the Shield hosted in November 2024 in Laval. The Shield of Athena celebrated 33 years of community service and the construction of our Second Step Resource!



General Assembly 2024

The Annual General Assembly was held in a hybrid format on June 17, 2024. A total of 21 people attended, including members, non-members, independent individuals, and staff. The activity report for the 2023–2024 year and updates regarding the second-stage resource were presented.

NETWORKING

The Shield of Athena is a member of several local tables and committees on domestic and family violence, as well as regional health and social services committees in Montreal and Laval. The Shield of Athena has played an active role in developing policies and strategies on conjugal violence, particularly in the provision of services to women and children from vulnerable backgrounds in Quebec.

Due to the opening of the second step shelter, we have also participated in several meetings of the Alliance of Second step Shelters for Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence (hereinafter "Alliance MH2"). Our Executive Director also co-chaired the gender-specific research of the Quebec Coalition for the Prevention of Homelessness (hereinafter "CQPI") on the lack of legislation and social housing for women victims of domestic violence.

A total of 234 hours were dedicated by BASF staff to establishing networks within the following committees and organizations.

RESSOURCE	PARTICIPANTS	
Table de concertation ev VC de Mtl	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
Table sur la violence conjugale et l'agression sexuelle de Laval	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
Alliance des MH de 2ième étape Rencontres spéciales 2ième /tape	Maria Kokkoris/Sierra Aggett	MA Interim
MIFI	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo
Regroupement de Francisation	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo
Collectif Québécois pour la prévention de l'itinérance CQPI	Melpa Kamateros	DE
CLIS Laval	Melpa Kamateros	DE
Coalition Féministes	Melpa Kamateros	DE
AGIR (Laval)	Maria Kokkoris Betty Petropoulos tsp	Coordo MA DSS
TVCASL Comités	Melpa Kamateros	DE BASF
Cellule d'action Concertée en VC	Maria Kokkoris	Coordo MA
Shelters Canada	Melpa Kamateros	ED
Table de Concertation de Laval	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo
Leaf	Melpa Kamateros	ED
Table de quartier de Parc-Extension	Sanovia McPhee	Admin
Table des femmes de Parc-Extension	Hasmik Manucharyan	Coordo

Information Sessions - Montreal

- 25 information sessions were organized this year, either in person or online;
- Five of these were legal information sessions, and two were medical information sessions;
- The sessions were conducted in English, French, Farsi, Bengali, Punjabi, and Urdu;
- A total of 460 participants attended these sessions.

Although these sessions are presently not funded by any government program, they are funded by funds secured by the Bombardier Foundation.

Where were they given?

- 9% were open to the public;
- 20% took place in high schools, CEGEPs, or universities;
- 55% were offered to our clients;
- 16% focused on legal issues.

Information Sessions - Laval

Eight information sessions were also held in Laval, bringing together 99 participants. These sessions covered the following topics: types of violence and the cycle of violence, myths surrounding domestic violence, police procedures in cases of domestic violence, immigration, divorce, separation, and child custody.

76% of the sessions were delivered as part of French language courses, 12% at community organizations, and 12% through social services.

The awareness sessions were presented by Hasmik Manucharyan, Rabiaa Mojbari, and Melpa Kamateros.

Other Activities - French Courses

In addition to its many services, The Shield has been offering French language courses, with a total of **209 classes** provided across multiple groups, including dedicated classes for victims of conjugal violence.

All sessions were held online, funded by MIFI, and coordinated by Hasmik Manucharyan and Maryam Azimi.

Registration is currently open for new beginner-level clients of the Shield. The organization is also providing courses at distance for women victims who do not leave their homes.

Activities for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

November 25 to December 6, 2024

As part of this year's domestic violence awareness campaign, the Shield of Athena produced a series of articles translated into multiple languages. Links to these articles were shared on our Facebook page and social media to direct readers to the content

PRESENTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

The Shield of Athena regularly presents its various specialized multilingual services.

Last year, the organization's staff gave six presentations to 513 students at educational institutions such as McGill University—in the faculties of Social Work and Medicine, the police corps and Lester B. Pearson School.

DATE	ORGANISATION	FACILITATORS	SESSIONS	PARTICIPANTS	SUBJECTS
August 29	McGill school of Medicine	M.K. & B. P.	2	380	Conjugal violence
November 30	McGill school of social work	M.K. & CI	1	6	Specialized services
March 13	Morgan Stanley	M.K.	1	46	Conjugal Violence/femicide
May 9	Enfants Retour Service de Police	F.E.	1	65	Conjugal Violence/children exposed
May 31	Lester B. Pearson Adult education	L.S	1	16	Conjugal Violence
Total			6	513	

Data of 2024-2025

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Employee and Intern Training

The total number of hours spent on training interns and employees on the organization's services and interventions was: **1,145 hours**.

Interns	# of participants	# of hours
McGill Law & Social Work	2	45
McGill CHAP-school of medicine	2	42
U de M Law & Social Work	2	176
Concordia	1	280
IC	6	332
Summer	5	200
Personnel	2	70
Total	20	1,145

Team Supervision

In total, **944 hours** were dedicated to supervising cultural intermediaries and client cases within the network by the social workers at the shelter and the coordinator of the external services.

Staff members	Team Supervisors	# of hours	# of meetings
Clinical Supervisors	Supervision of shelter residents	700	50
Clinical Supervisors	Supervision of cases at external <i>(twice per week)</i>	144	48
Hasmyk Manucharyan	Supervision of CI	100	50
Total		944	148

Time Spent By Executive Director

Meeting	#	# of meetings
Funding/Project Development	187	53%
Board/Admin/Training/Support/HR	117	33%
Visibility/Outreach/Networking /Representation	44	14%
Total	348	100%

The Executive Director participated in 348 meetings for a total of 831 hours last year. Networking, visibility, and awareness activities accounted for 14% of her time. Administration, training, supervision, and human resources represent 33% of her time.

Over half of her time, 53% is dedicated to project and service development, as well as fundraising.

Observation: The ED was still involved with administrative functions that include the HR situation and the need for training and supervision of new employees. In addition to the second-stage resource, there was also funding to be obtained for the construction at the Emergency shelter and a new project developed for the IC, funded by the MSSSS.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play an integral role in the continued support that we offer our clients and their children and the smooth sailing of our events and fundraisers. Although not up to pre-COVID standards, this year, we had 261 volunteers who gave a total of **2,349 volunteer hours** of their time.

We want to thank everyone who took the initiative and found ways to support our mission and help the women and children access our services. Some of the volunteer work that took place this year was the delivery of food to clients in need, students doing philanthropy projects, fundraising by board members and individuals, and donations of personal hygiene products, toys, and clothing. The participation of people on our fundraising committees and the donation of their professional services are also taken into account.



Employees from BMO who participated in our annual picnic at Jarry Park.



Members of Église de Dieu La Source who came help our team clean the Montreal office.

LAVAL ANNUAL REPORT

Clients

In Laval, we had a total of 131 cases, both short-term and long-term; including new and existing clients.

Short-Term Cases

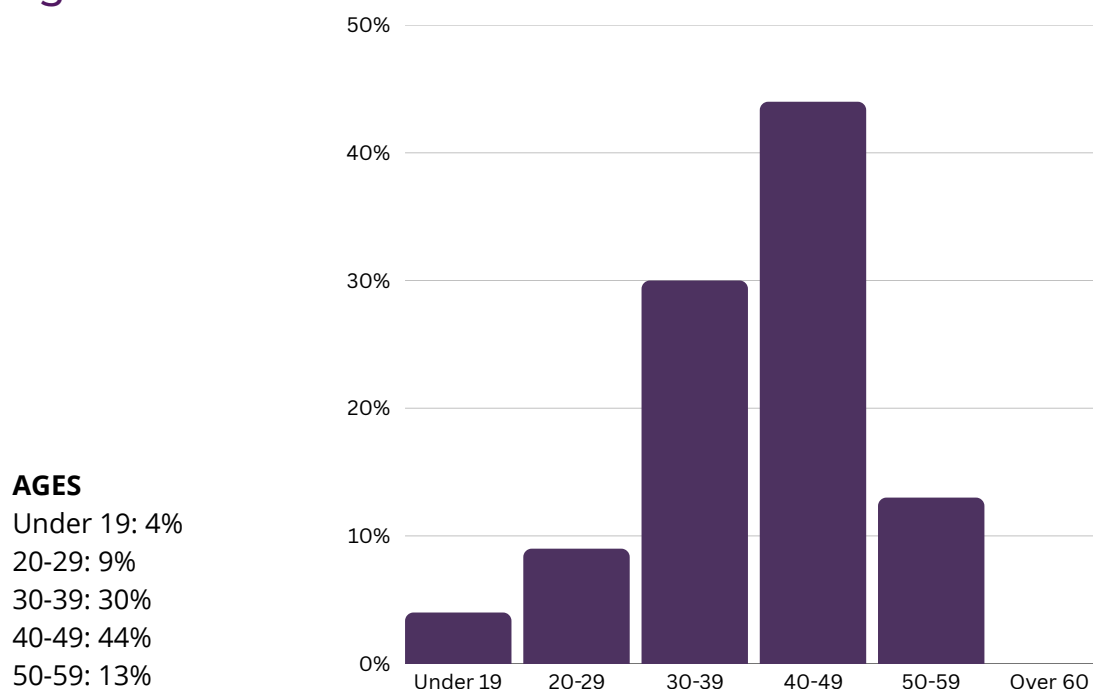
Among these, 96 new cases were short-term cases for which we did not open a file. This is because, after the initial interventions (active listening, guidance, and consultations), the clients did not return to seek our services or did not make the final decision to leave their abusive partner. Among these 119 new cases:

- 20 % did not spoke English nor French;
- 32% spoke English;
- 48 % spoke French only;
- 90 % are abuses cases;
- 2 % are cases of VBH and family violence;
- 8 % are cases related to issues in accessing services.

Long-Term Cases (Based on 23 New Cases)

We have **23 new cases** that became long term files.

Ages



Preferred Language of New Cases

- 30% spoke English;
- 35% spoke French;
- 35% of these clients spoke neither English nor French.

Ethnic Background

- 70% come from various ethnic communities;
- 17% are of Anglo-Canadian origin;
- 13% are of French-Canadian origin.

Sources of Referral

- 78% of referrals came from the Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS), Youth Protection Services (DPJ), hospitals, SOS Violence Conjugale, and the broader social services network;
- 9% were made through word of mouth, either between clients or within communities;
- 9% came from schools and other community organizations;
- 4% originated from the Shield of Athena's website.

Observation: The majority of our referrals were from the existing services of Quebec, sharing a large use of our specialized services.

Nature of the Issue

In 91% of our cases, it is conjugal violence and 9% is family violence.

Long-Term Cases

Out of the 131 new cases recorded in Laval, **23 developed into long-term files**. While many short-term interventions included active listening, referrals, and consultations, no case file was opened in numerous instances. This is primarily due to clients not having made the final decision to leave their abusive partner. In several cases, women facing **language barriers, financial dependency, or lack of support** were unable to make that decision.

It is important to note that despite the growing **need for additional interventions in Laval**, the lack of funding prevents the organization from hiring more social workers. As a result, we are currently operating **at a deficit**. This year, a total of **35 long-term cases**, both new and ongoing, were handled in Laval.

In **35% of these cases**, intervention was conducted in a language other than French or English. The clients received the following services:

Services	2024-2025
Interventions (by e-mail)	229
Accompaniments	3
Telephone	273
Advocacy	100
Referrals	23
Individual Consultations	289
Children	3
Family	3
Legal Aid	18
Support Groups / Interventions	20
Financial Assistance	99
Total	1060

Observations on the Services

Specialized Services

Linguistic Services Given by the CIs in Laval: Laval Project

This year, the organization received funding through the MSSSS to consolidate and expand the CI services in Laval. As such, we were able to maintain these specialized services, which are essential for effective intervention with allophone women and so as to enhance their process of empowerment.

Through this expanded program, we provide ongoing support to the DPJ, CAVAC, the three shelters, Urgences Laval and other collaborators in conjugal violence in Laval. The program began in August 2024 and to date 107 interventions have been provided, with **17 women** receiving support in **10 different languages: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Farsi, Mandarin Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tamoul, and Urdu.**

	Arabe	Armenian	Bengali	Spanish	Farsi	Mandarin	Punjabi	Russian	Tamil	Urdu	Total
# of women	3	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	17
Consultations	6	2				1		1			10
Online Consultations			8	2					4		14
Phone call Consultations	12	3		2	2	1	1	2		3	26
Assistance								1			1
Phone call and online assistance											
Phone call	2	3		1		6		9			21
Listening/ information / referral	13	1		4			3			8	29
Economic assistance								1			1
Legal Clinic Clinique		1				1		1			3
Complementary intervention	1									1	2
Total	34	10	8	9	2	9	4	15	4	12	107

Observation: Kindly note that of the 107 interventions 70% were done within the context of the Laval project.

Women victims facing language barriers are often unable to access existing services and require longer intervention times than those who speak English or French. Indeed, we adopt a tripartite intervention approach, which includes social workers, cultural intermediaries, and the clients. Through this program an intersectoral approach is promoted where all partners are working to benefit the women and children victims of this type of abuse.

Children's Services

There were 2 training sessions on parenting roles, 4 consultations for children, and 2 family sessions held in Laval.

Financial Services

Through various activities and despite the pandemic, 68 people received financial assistance twice this year. This aid included money, gifts for children, and food baskets. All of this was provided by various businesses, individuals, and associations.

Awareness

During the last statistical period, 8 awareness sessions were organized in French courses at Loisirs Bon Pasteur, an organization primarily working with newcomers, at a community organization, and for the workers of a coordination table in Laval, reaching a total of 99 people.

These sessions aimed to facilitate integration and provide essential information. As part of the "integration" component, a legal session was offered. Led by law interns from the University of Montreal, this session addressed access to justice in family law and perceptions related to violence against women, thereby providing participants with valuable tools and knowledge to navigate the Quebec legal system.

The persons responsible for these sessions are Hasmik Manucharyan and Rabiaa Mojbari.

SECOND STEP RESOURCE IN LAVAL



Construction at the Second Step Resource

Since 2010, the Shield of Athena has set aside funds for the acquisition and development of a second-stage housing resource for women and their children who are victims of domestic and/or family violence, following their stay in a shelter.

The project was approved by the Laval Coordinating Committee on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Laval Women's Groups Coordinating Committee, three Laval shelters (Maison de Lina, Maison d'Esther, and Maison Le Prélude), the Laval Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (hereinafter "CISSS"), and the City of Laval. The technical support team collaborated with BASF and Réseau 2000+.

In December 2014, the Société d'Habitation du Québec (hereinafter "SHQ") confirmed the reservation of 14 units for this resource. In May 2016, the organization signed the deed of acquisition for the property in Laval. The project received final approval in November 2020 for the construction of 17 units, and construction began at that time. Our partner in this project is Réseau 2000+, which has since merged with *Bâtir son Quartier*. We are also members of the Alliance of Second-Stage Housing Resources.

The time devoted to this project by the Executive Director has been considerable: to date, 60 on-site meetings have taken place with engineers and architects concerning the construction of the second-stage housing resource.

The resource is expected to be operational in the summer of 2025. The Executive Director is overseeing the completion of the project and attends all on-site meetings. Since 2022, Maria Kokkoris, Coordinator of the Maison d'Athéna, as well as Betty Petropoulos, social worker and Director of Social Services, have also been involved in establishing admission criteria, a code of conduct, and residency rules for the resource. The organization has also included the three Laval shelters—Maison Lina, Maison Esther, and Maison Le Prélude—in this process.

ATHENA'S HOUSE

Annual Report 2024-2025

Message of the Board of Directors

It has been quite a few years that we have been complaining about the lack of space in our emergency shelter, Athena's House. From 2004, it has welcomed thousands of women and children who have been in abusive relationships. We would like to recognize the wonderful work done by the shelter staff, headed by our coordinator, Maria Kokkoris, throughout this time.

Unfortunately, in addition to the increased need for more space, wear and tear on the shelter has also taken its toll.

The pandemic brought on the possibilities of funding to have more staff and people in the shelter but there are many costs associated with this expansion. After 20 years in operation we need a revamp! Some of the funds necessary for our one million dollar shelter project have been received from government funding but we are also embarking on a major 5 million dollar corporate campaign to fully develop the organization, including our shelter.

We thank everybody who has helped to date. These reports show what it is that they are supporting.

Board of Directors, SOAFS

Report of the Coordinator of Athena's House - Maria Kokkoris

As the coordinator of the shelter, I am pleased to share with you this year's statistical report for the 2024–2025 period. This report reflects the vital work carried out every day to support women and children fleeing violence and seeking safety, stability, and healing.

During this reporting period, we provided shelter, emotional support, guidance, and essential services to 37 women and 47 children, for a total of 84 individuals. We welcomed fewer people this year compared to last year, but this is due to the fact that women are staying significantly longer as a result of serious language barriers, immigration issues, and the difficulty of finding housing—whether second-stage resources or affordable independent accommodations. All of this has required us to extend their stays compared to previous years. See below for more details.

The average length of stay per person was 65 days, representing a significant increase of 77%. Our occupancy rate reached 88%. This is the highest increase we have seen, mainly due to the fact that more women are facing severe language barriers, which delays all of their steps toward stability.

Once again, women and children are being welcomed directly into our facility, entering through the doors of the shelter. This is a positive change in these times of family crisis, always accompanied by a warm smile. Part of our expenses was funded by the PAMH, but it was still necessary for the organization to conduct fundraising efforts and to contribute out of our own pockets for this second major project. We are delighted to announce that the expansion of our Shelter is nearly complete, and the result is absolutely beautiful! Thanks to these new spaces, we can now accommodate up to 17 people at a time, with dedicated areas where our counselors can provide the essential support services our residents need!



Construction at the shelter

Clients

Ethnic Origins and Languages of Communication

33% of the women we accommodated this year at La Maison d'Athéna were Canadian citizens, or landed immigrants; and 27% were sponsored permanent residents; 28 % were refugee claimants or accepted refugees; and 5 % had no status at all. A final 8% were women with work permits. We are seeing an increase in the number of immigrant women who are being sent to our shelter.

Status	Number	%
Canadian Citizen	4	11
Citizen Immigrated	8	22
Sponsored Permanent Resident	10	27
Permanent Resident Through Refugee Status	1	3
Refugee Claimant	7	19
Accepted Refugee	2	5
No Status	2	5
Retraction of Sponsorship	0	0
Visa	0	0
Work Permit	3	8
Total	37	100

Country of Birth	Number	%
Canadian Born	4	11
Born Outside of Canada	33	89
Total	37	100

89% of these women were born outside Canada, and 19 different ethno-cultural communities were represented.

Of these 37 women, 20, 54%, slightly more than one in every two representing presented with severe linguistic barriers and had difficulties in communicating in either French or English. The languages they spoke were the following: Bengali (1), Spanish (9), Farsi (2), Arabic (3), Punjabi (2), Hindi (1), Urdu (1) and Russian/Ukrainian (1).

Languages spoken by our workers at the shelter included Arabic, Creole, Spanish, Greek, Farsi, English, and French. Our trained cultural interpreters at the Montreal office also provided translation to shelter clients in Bengali, Urdu, Dari, Farsi, Punjabi, Arab, Armenian, Spanish, Gujarati, Hindi, Mandarin, Russian, Ukrainian and Tamil.

It is important to note, however, that even if the client possessed an adequate knowledge of French or English, it was always much easier for the women to express themselves in their language of origin.

Average Age of our Clients

The ages of the women who stayed at the shelter this year are as follows:

Ages	Number	%
13-17	0	0
18-25	5	14%
26-30	6	16%
31-35	11	30%
36-40	7	19%
41-50	7	19%
51-60	1	3%
61+	0	0%
Total	37	100%

Observation: Once again this year, younger and younger women are recognizing the issue of conjugal violence and coming to shelters for services. The largest age group was young women between 18-35, which represents 60% of our residents. This indicates that conjugal violence is still present in society.

Ages	Number
Less than one year old	4
1-4	11
5-8	12
9-12	15
13-15	3
16-18	1
18+	1 (20 yrs old)
Total	47

Observation: 57% of the children at the shelter were between the ages of 5-12 and had been exposed to some type of violence in the home, this group needed special intervention; 21% of the children at Athena's House were between 1-4, indicating the need for diapers, baby formula and special foods.

Nature of the Problems

Among the 37 women we accommodated this year, 89% endured violence at the hands of their partners/ex-partners while 4% had experienced violence within a family context.

Number of Clients	Type of Violence	%	Definition
33	Conjugal Violence	89%	Spouses & Ex partners
3	Family Violence	8%	son/brother in law/parents
1	CV & FV	3%	Spouse/ In-Laws
0	CV & HBV	0	-
0	HBV	0	-
Total: 37		100%	

Types of Abuse

We accommodated women who have lived through different types of violence. This year, 77% (28 women) of the shelter residents were victims of physical violence, while 97% (36 women) of them had also experienced economic and/or sexual violence. Psychological and/or verbal violence was also present in 89% (33 women) of the cases.

In the past year, 7 of the women (19 %) or one in every five, who accessed our services reported having been strangled by their partner. Strangulation is a form of intimate partner violence that is both highly dangerous and often underreported, making its presence in our data especially concerning. It has also been the indicator of possible femicide or murder attempts.

Sources of Referral

The women accommodated this year were referred to our shelter by various organizations and/or individuals. 41% came from the SOS line, 27 % from existing social services, including other shelters, CLSCs, hospitals, and community resources; 11% came from the police; and 14% were referred by external clients.

Source	Number	%
SOS Violence Conjugale	15	41%
CLSC	3	8%
Youth Protection	2	5%
Other Shelters	1	3%
Police	4	11%
Community Resources	5	14%
Referred by BASF (external clients)	5	14%
Lafu	1	3%
Hospital	1	3%
Total	37	100%

Profile of our Clients

The women who used our services were only minimally aware of their rights and of the resources available to them. As per the shelter workers' observations, women were likely to be unaware of their legal status or their legal rights in Canada, primarily as a result of the social isolation they experienced at the hands of their partners. This vulnerable situation puts women at a disadvantage, particularly those women who come from ethno-cultural communities.

Services Offered at the Shelter

Individual consultations: This year, our case workers held 687 individual consultations. Of the 687 consultations, 269, or 39%, an increase of 10% from last year, were done in a language other than English or French. These languages were Bengali, Spanish, Punjabi, Arabic, Hindi, Farsi, Urdu and Russian/Ukrainian. The CIs from external services participated in this. Despite a decline in the number of women due to longer stay, we continue to see a notable increase in consultations with women facing severe language barriers

Accompaniments: This year, our caseworkers carried out 113 accompaniments; Of these, 70, or 62%, an increase of 44%, were done in a language other than English or French. They were done with either a CI or a social worker who spoke the client's language. This presents the vulnerability, primarily linguistic that these clients have in accessing information and services.

Telephone consultations: The shelter staff dealt with 9, 724 calls.

Legal Information Consultations:

Each client has the opportunity to consult the legal clinic in order to receive legal information about her rights. If the client chooses to exercise her rights, we refer her either to legal aid or to a lawyer. This year, the legal clinic held 6 consultations. A legal presentation was also organized for the shelter.

Info activities: We offer information activities on the different aspects and dynamics of conjugal violence, as well as other pertinent topics, such as stress management, interpersonal growth, and tools to help cope with the consequences of conjugal and family violence. The duration for a typical session is 1 and a half hours. These activities allow residents to speak about their experiences, in a safe space while breaking isolation in sharing their experience with the other residents. There were a total of 7 information sessions on conjugal violence, and a total of 11 different women benefited from these sessions.

Economic assistance: It can happen that our clients arrive at the shelter with little or no personal belongings. We therefore offer them economic assistance that can consist of second-hand and new clothing. Each client (37) who resided at the shelter received a welcome package, including toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.) in addition to the above clothing. Furthermore, upon their departure from the shelter, women were offered essential household items, such as cutlery, plates, and glasses. During and after their stay, their children were also provided with free clothes, diapers, and baby formula. Seven clients were also referred to external services in Montreal for free clothing. A total of 84 women and children were provided with material and economic assistance during the last statistical period. These were provided by different associations and individuals.

Demystification of the social services network and the laws: This is ongoing and is considered a specialized service. Obviously, 54% of our clientele who had severe language issues benefited from this service since the information was given to them in their language of origin. Women coming from ethnic communities are doubly vulnerable because most of them present severe linguistic and or cultural blocks that may impede them from knowing basic issues regarding their rights and accessing the health and social services network.

Advocacy: This is ongoing and integrated into most of the services that are given, such as accompaniments and consultations with the government. This year, 39% of consultations and 62% of accompaniments were done in a language other than English or French.

Follow-up services: Once a client is ready to leave, their needs are assessed, and they are given information regarding the external services for follow-up for themselves and their children. This may be a follow-up of a series of consultations, support, and economic or legal services. This year, of the clients that were referred to the external services upon their departure from the shelter, 1 became long-term clients and received external services at either Montreal or Laval.

Where do the Women Go After They Leave the Shelter?

The single most important thing for women leaving the shelter is finding secure and affordable housing. As of the past year, this is the breakdown:

Where They Go	Number of People	%
Second Stage Housing: Security, Services	7	19%
Independent Housing: Rental, no security, expensive	5	14%
Returned to Abusive Relationship: No security	6	16%
Returned to Home without partner:: No Security	4	11%
Transferred to Another Shelter	4	11%
Went to Family/Friends: No Security	2	5%
Left Shelter	1	3%
Other Housing program	3	8%
HLM	3	8%
Other	2	5%
Total:	37	100%

The risk that a threat or danger would arise for 56% of the women and children leaving the shelter—whether by returning to abusive relationships or moving into another unsafe environment—was a very real concern.

Among the 19% who accessed a second-stage housing resource, only half (those who spoke French) were accepted. As for the 14% who found an apartment, these units did not meet safety needs for victims of post-separation violence, and the women were paying very high rents.

Put simply, women leaving the shelter face serious danger, and available resources are limited.

Trainings

Shelter workers participated in the following trainings this year:

- Seeds of Possibility: Understanding Alternative Justice Practices in the Gender-Based Violence Sector; 1.5 hours (2 people)
- End Female Genital Mutilation Canada Network; 30 minutes (1 person)
- Initiative to End GBV Online Training Focused on Immigrant and Refugee Communities
- Sécurité du Logement pour les femmes victimes de violence conjugale: l'efficacité des refuges transitoires (maisons de 2^{ième} étape)
- Responding to Disclosures of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Supporting Survivors of Gender-Based Violence & Brain Injury (GBV-BI) Pratiques en Violence Conjugale: S'unir pour gérer la complexité et favoriser la sécurité; 3 hours (2 people)
- Sécurité informatique et Maison d'Hébergement : Des outils nécessaires à mettre en place
- Étranglement en contexte de violence conjugale; 2 hours (3 people)
- IURDPM | Violence conjugale et traumatisme craniocérébral: vers un écosystème de soutien intégré pour les femmes; 3 hours (4 people)
- Webinaire CQPI - Sécurité du logement pour les femmes victimes de violence conjugale: l'efficacité des refuges transitoires; 2 hours (5 people)
- Formation Contrôle coercitif; 3 hours (3 people)
- Séances sur les bonnes pratiques; 2 hours (1 person)
- Effectively managing and treating trauma disorders, including PTSD 2 people)
- Missing children network; 3 hours (1 person)
- Tribunal Spécialisé; 2 hours (4 people)
- Droits des enfants; 7 hours (4 people)
- Sécurité de logement; 2 hours (5 people)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: SHIELD OF ATHENA FAMILY SERVICES

April 1st, 2024 to March 31st, 2025

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Evelyne Chéry, int
Yolette Chéry, tsp
Francesca Esguerra, Drama therapist
Maely Doyont, Youth Worker
Sierra Aggett, Tsp
Lea Fhima, int
Lise Vo, int
Emily Saad, Tsp;
Fatima SiDjilali, House manager

Community Outreach

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Rabiaa Mojbari
Leeza Sultana
Farrah Naz
Maryam Azimi

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Hasmik Manucharyan	Tharmia Ganeshamoorthy
Maryam Azimi	Maria Del Pilar Rebolledo-Gonzalez
Rabiaa Mojbari	Liudmyla Tigha
Leeza Sultana	Feza Fatima Chaudhry
Irma Alvarez	Chaymae Tahriue
Sanovia McPhee	

OVERVIEW OF STATISTICAL REPORT

April 1st, 2024 to March 31st, 2025

ACTIVITIES & SERVICES	# PEOPLE	QUANTITY
Clients External & Shelter	1,496	- External: 1,412 cases - Shelter: 84 clients - Occupancy rate: 88%
Presentations & Training to professionals	533 21	- Presentations: 6 - Trainings: 1,145 hours
French Classes	100+	4 sessions: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer 209 classes
Economic Assistance	200+	- Food Baskets - Hellenic Appeal - Foundation–Baskets - Suzy Shier Clothing Donation
Volunteer	261	2349 hours
Employee & Volunteer Training	22	944 hours
Activities	250+	- Lilac Gala - Annual Assembly 2024 - Annual picnic for clients - Devictimization groups
Media Programs	60,000+ *estimate	- CTV, Global News, City News, The Suburban, CBC, CJAD, La Presse - Multilingual Outreach Campaign–articles in the ethnic media
Community Outreach	1,102	33 sessions 6 presentations– 513 students
Social Media Campaigns Reach generated by Youtube Linkedin Engagement	1,428 9,832 viewers 613 viewers	Multilingual Outreach campaign on Facebook and Instagram