



# Annual Report

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## 2020-2021



cease

## Our Vision

A community of hope, respect, and transformation for individuals, families and communities affected by sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, and inequality.

## Our Mission

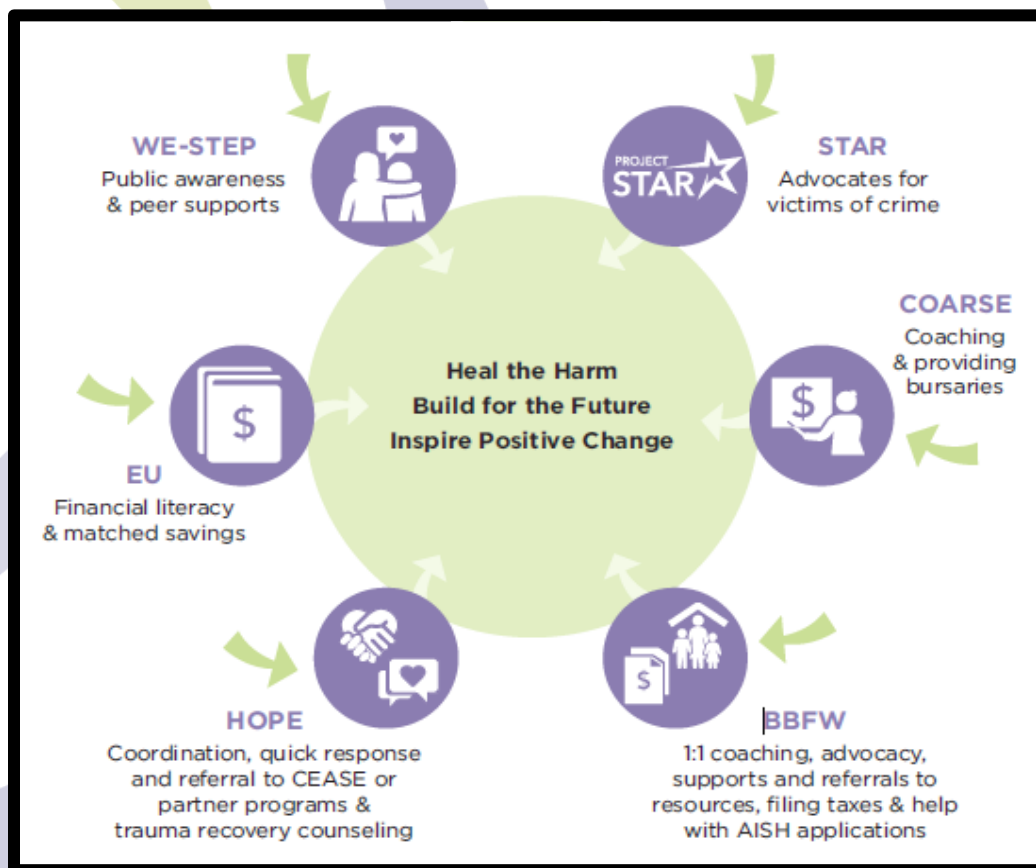
We advocate to end all sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, and provide tool to help persons heal and renew their lives.

## Our Strategies

Heal the Harm

Build for the Future

Inspire Social Change



We imagine a community free from sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.  
We want to eliminate social inequality and injustice.  
We want to build empathy and inspire positive social change.

This year, the CEASE team worked with over 270 participants.

# I. Heal the Harm

## Project STAR

Victim Advocate Program - Support, Transition, Action, Recovery

Funder: Alberta Justice and Solicitor General Victims of Crime Fund Grant

STAR Advocates supported 15 new participants and 21 ongoing participants this year. There were 3 referrals to other CEASE programs (BBFW, EMPOWER-U) this year.

STAR has 8 trials that are in various stages of the court-process. Crimes that STAR is providing ongoing trial supports for include: Trafficking in Persons (9), Family Violence (1), Other: Violent (2), and Threats/ Harassment (2). STAR has concluded court processes for 2 Sexual Assault cases. STAR has assisted one other Victim Services Unit in court attendance for a sexual assault. Additionally, at the request of the Crown Prosecutor, STAR provided court support for a victim of sexual assault causing bodily harm. This trial is in the process of sentencing.

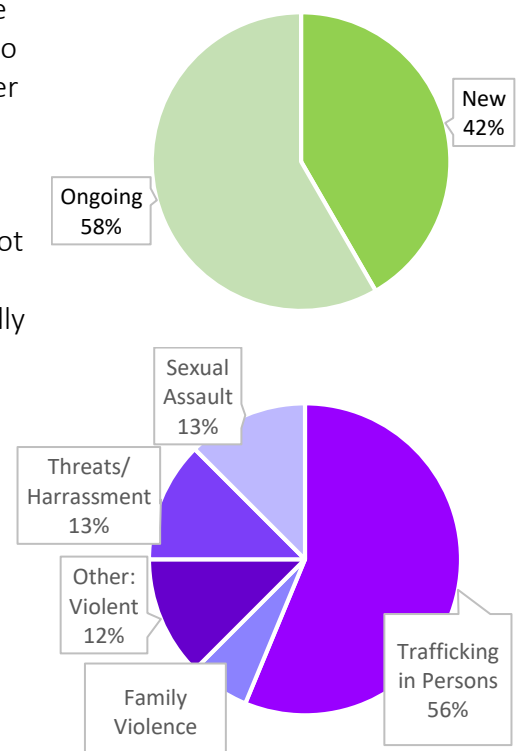
### Impact Stories

#### Participant One:

"The victim advocate was able to help me with the court process, she was able to connect me with a counsellor within one day and it was helpful to be prepared and what to expect. Star supported me throughout the court process and help me to remember to breath when thing got difficult. During the break in the court process, it was wonderful to be able to have someone to talk to and process my feelings with. My advocate followed up with me after court, we did a check in and it made me feel taking care of."

#### Participant One:

"Star was able to quickly support me in court, as my advocate was not able to come with me to court. Star was with me in court and took the time to into the evening just so I had someone to talk with. I really was happy that Kim was there with me, to explain what was happening in court; she also helped connect me to a lawyer so I could get a restraining order against the accused. I still call Kim from time to time, just because she can help me when I have a question."



## II. Build for the Future

### COARSE

Coaching & Bursaries Program: Creating Options Aimed at Reducing Sexual Exploitation

Staff position funded by: United Way Alberta Capital Region, private donors, and casino funds

This year, COARSE provided support to 77 individuals. This includes 28 new participants, 49 ongoing participants, and 3 referrals to other CEASE programs (Taxes, HOPE, STAR). COARSE provided a total of 16 bursaries, including 9 general bursaries, 1 MacEwan University bursary, and 6 NorQuest bursaries. There were 18 Trauma Recovery/ Counselling requests (via email and telephone), and referrals were given to CCC, DOCHAS, and Saffron.

### Impact Stories

#### Participant One

"I just wanted to say thank you for all the help that I received over the last 2 years. I received supports from Cease starting with the basic first steps and throughout my recent educational advancements. I have been exploited since the age of 11 years old and never received opportunities that materialized into planning a future beyond sex work. The step-by-step process Cease offered me has now led me to the University of Alberta and I will receive certification within the next year. I am no longer working in the sex trade for the past year and have been able to sustain myself with employment while continuing my education. Cease has filled me with confidence in my ability to move forward into a promising career. Cease has made this an easy transition for me after so many years of being hopeless. I plan to contribute as much as I possible once I am able to the further education and support of people like myself. I want to thank everybody who has helped along the way and contributed to my success story. You will never know how much it means to feel excepted, capable and educated. To have people there who care and to help support me has been instrumental. These supports have made an impact on my family, the community and my future. The work this organization does is unsurpassed with unbiased, unprejudiced outreach and ongoing support. I truly appreciate all the work it takes on so many levels to make this possible. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to grow, learn and look forward to a future. Thank you for believing in me."

#### Participant Two

"I appreciate your time in reading this letter as I do not think I would be able to express how profoundly grateful I and many women in similar situations are for people as kind and selfless as you without attempting to shed light on my own experiences and the difficulty and high risk associated with working in the sex work industry. Your donations go a long way in preventing much psychological and physical suffering and provide a sense of hope for those fighting for a better life. I am aware that my experiences are small in relation to other women in Edmonton, but I hope that sharing them with you will reassure you that your funding is incredibly important to me and many women in a similar situation and is used incredibly responsibly and wisely by the CEASE organization and all of their amazing and passionate staff. I can confidently say that your thoughtfulness and dedication of your own resources that you have worked hard for has touched many lives and has made an impact possibly greater than you could ever imagine."



# EMPOWER U: Building Confident Futures

## Financial Literacy Program

(Part of the United Way EU Collaborative; funded through the United Way, several Foundations, Corporate Partners and donors.) <https://www.myunitedway.ca/empoweru/>

This year, 37 individuals participated in 3 Empower U 10-Week Group Sessions. 35 completed the program, with 25 achieving their saving goals. Other CEASE programs referred 7 of these participants, while the remainder were referred by previous participants and partner programs.

In October, we had 4 new volunteer financial coaches join our Empower U team. These coaches are also available to support other CEASE program participants.

14 participants attended 1:1 financial coaching. With a total of 26 hours of individual coaching. All of the participants this year have been accessing coaching via ZOOM and email due to Covid 19 restrictions.

CEASE coaches also worked with 4 participants who had been Empower U participants in 2018 and 2019, who had met with a coach previously and were ready to move on to the next steps in dealing with their debt and rebuilding their credit.

Two of our three groups this year were held virtually. For these groups, the Empower U coordinator met virtually with each participant to complete all the required paperwork and delivered the binders.

By offering virtual groups, participants who have barriers such as babysitting or are uncomfortable in group settings were able to attend. We were also able to reach participants who would not have attended the classes in person as the location would have been challenging to get to (3 bus transfers in some instances).

The number of cash outs decreased this year, as some participants were impacted by a loss of income. Participant's financial priorities became taking care of their basic needs instead of saving for emergencies.

## Statements from Participants

*"I never realized how important a budget is. I'm starting to see my spending patterns now"*

*"The speakers made me think about things I never thought of!"*

*"I think I am in a place where I am ready to deal with my debt now. Feels hopeful"*

*"Not only did I learn a lot from the classes, but I got to meet with a financial coach to work on my debt and also get my taxes done!"*

*"It feels good to know that I'm not the only one who has been struggling with debt, I don't feel as overwhelmed as I used to!"*

## BBFW: Building Blocks for Women

### Long-Term Coaching, Advocacy and Supports Program

Funded by the Stollery Charitable Foundation; donors and Casino funds.

This year, BBFW made over 300 connections and referrals to various community and government programs and resources. BBFW supported 7 new participants and 23 ongoing participants, including 11 mothers parenting 21 children and 11 women who identify as Indigenous. There were a total of 10 referrals to CEASE programs: Taxes (5), STAR (1), EMPOWER U (1), and HOPE (3). Additionally, 7 individuals were helped to secure safe and affordable housing through our community partnerships with CMHA and Boyle Street Housing Services.

### BBFW Tax Filing Advocate Program

Funded by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada.

In this fiscal year, 24 income tax preparations were completed, and 4 individuals were referred to other CEASE programs. There were 13 women who returned for help, and 8 new applicants. The Advocate continues to help women file throughout the year.

From the CRA CVITP Program: *"Thank you for your time and commitment to the 2021 Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) and participating in our 50th year of helping people do their taxes."*

### Tax Success

"I wanted to follow up with you regarding the help you provided me with my taxes. As you know I did not do my taxes for four years out of fear of having to pay back my taxes while I was doing my grad studies. I was able to overcome my fear as you were warm and friendly over the phone which allowed me to go ahead and file my taxes. I so appreciate the help you provided me and how this is such a valuable service to people like myself."

## Impact Stories

### Working Together

After experiencing several violent attacks from a boyfriend, a BBFW participant reached out to the coordinator for help. A safety plan was developed, the locks on the apartment door was changed, and a police complaint was filed.

Unfortunately, the perpetrator visited daily with a relative who happened to live on the opposite corner to the victim's apartment - this gave him the opportunity to observe both her and her daughter when they were walking to school, and threatening them with serious threats of harm.

The BBFW Coordinator reached out to the landlord Canada Mental Health Association, and asked if it would be possible to move the victim and her daughter to one of their other properties in a different part of the city. The housing coordinator was empathetic to the situation and very quickly made a move possible. Along with emergency moving expenses through AISH, and additional support through the CEASE Hope Program, the participant moved to a new apartment in a neighbourhood where she feels much safer.

## HOPE

### Quick Response Program: Help Others Prosper Equally

Staff position funded by an Anonymous Donor, other foundations and donors; the HOPE Fund is provided by the Taillefer Family Foundation.

This year, HOPE supported 149 individuals and addressed immediate needs through 346 calls, emails, and knocks at the door. 100 participants received charity support such as food cards and bus tickets. Additionally, 17 participants worked closely with the HOPE Coordinator on in-depth transition plans and were provided financial support through the HOPE Fund: Bridge to Employment after Graduating (2), Career Path – In School Training Program (7), and Overcoming Barriers to Livable Income (8)

### Impact Stories

“CEASE checks up on me and is consistent with follow-ups. There was never a time I did not feel supported when I asked for help. Because of the can-do attitude from my support worker at CEASE, I feel I can overcome my challenges and achieve goals. With the help of CEASE, I am more comfortable advocating for myself.”

“CEASE provided me with a lot of support to access community resources and agencies that can help me with my housing needs. With the support of CEASE, I discovered I am capable of overcoming the challenges I am facing. My self-esteem has improved. I know more information about my rights and resources available to me



Thanks to Tanya and Rowan DaEstrela for inviting community friends to create backpacks filled with items to support women fleeing sex trafficking and sexual exploitation situations.

# III. Inspire Social Change

## We-STEP: We Stop Exploitation and Trafficking

Peer Support & Public Education Program

Staff position funded by The Taillefer Family Foundation

The We-STEP Coordinator provides 1:1 peer support and helps to organize the Annual August 14 Memorial, which was hosted virtually in 2020. We-STEP has also participated in several public education campaigns this year, including a collaboration with Edmonton Police Services and Sexual Exploitation Working Group to raise awareness of human trafficking.

The Coordinator focused primarily on the Sisters4Sisters online peer-support group, given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This group supports Indigenous women who have experienced sexual exploitation, and addresses difficult topics from trauma-informed perspective. The group asks questions such as:

What does MMIW mean to me?

What do we explain to our children, when they ask about our past exploitation?

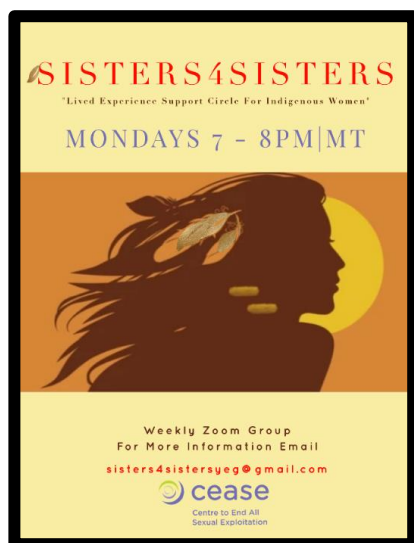
Are intimate relationships affected by trauma?

How does the symbolic red hand across mouths of MMIW affect you?

How can we honour our journey as we break the chain of intergenerational trauma?

How do we engage with Indigenous men, breaking our own stigmas?

11 participants have joined the Sisters4Sisters circle throughout the months, while 3 have been consistent. Sister4Sisters was proud to engage a social work practicum student from Yellowhead Tribal College. (This group was supported through a grant from the Sisters of St. Joseph Canada)



### Impact Story

“Something is missing in my life, this group allows me not to feel alone. I like that we can have a great, supportive group, and every week I get ready with a cup of tea & bannock. This is the best hour in my Mondays, because the group discussion always brings up important things. It feels good share & feel safe, not judged “



# STOP

## Sex Trade Offender Program

STOP programs and Law Enforcement undercover operations were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Two programs were held in 2020 for 13 men arrested in 2019, so they could complete their Adult Alternative Measures Program requirements.

“This course has opened my eyes to the consequences that human trafficking has and that it’s committed in every country of the world.”

“This program and learning about the consequences of the actions on both sides of the exchange” was noted as something that would help him quit for good.

# SEWG

[www.edmontonsewg.org](http://www.edmontonsewg.org)

CEASE chairs this Leadership Group which offers quarterly webinars and an Annual Week of Awareness.

Topics this year included:

- Understanding Boys and Men Who have Been Sexually Exploited
- Pathways in and out of Sexual Exploitation: Engaging Men and Boys
- Raising Awareness of Sexual Exploitation Through Technological Innovations
- Preventing Sexual Exploitation of Youth in Online Spaces

## NEW Partnership! 2021 - 2024

### A Safer Way Out: An Integrated Response to Sex Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

Partners: REACH Edmonton, CEASE, Catholic Social Services, ALERT Human Trafficking Counter Exploitation Unit.

Funded by Public Safety Canada Program to Combat Serious and Organized Crime

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# Funders

## Foundations:

The Edmonton Community Foundation:

Flow-through Funds at Edmonton Community Foundation:

Eldon & Anne Foote Fund for Education: To support bursaries.

AWINITA Fund: Bursaries for Indigenous Women

Cara's Friendship Fund: General Operations

CEASE Fund: Board, Staff and Volunteer Training and Appreciation

Nelson Fok Fund: General Operations

Cable Family Community Endowment Fund: For Bursaries.

The Stollery Charitable Foundation

The Taillefer Family Foundation

The Echo Foundation

## Provincial Government:

Justice and Solicitor General, Victims of Crime Fund

Community Facility Enhancement Program

## Municipal Government:

City of Edmonton Community Investment Operating Grant

## Community Donors:

United Way of Alberta Capital Region

Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Many Individual Donors

Home Depot Community Foundation

## Donations

Hillberg & Berk (International Women's Day Fundraiser)

Soroptimist International Edmonton

Emergency Community Support Fund (Federal Government)

Canadian Women's Foundation

Edmonton Community Foundation and Community Foundation of Canada

United Way Alberta Capital Region



HILLBERG & BERK