



For Immediate Release

Two Calgary Shelters Announce Partnership to Enhance Supports for Women Fleeing Domestic Violence

March 15, 2023 – Calgary, AB –YW Calgary and FearIsNotLove are pleased to be leading a partnership of service and emergency providers to ensure an enhanced system of care is available to those receiving supports in and out of domestic violence shelters.

Many more Calgarians reach out to crisis shelters for support every day than can be accommodated within their walls. We know that not all calls for support require a shelter stay; some people can be supported safely in their homes and communities by receiving comprehensive community-based services that empower them to make positive changes in their lives.

This partnership will see an expansion in the use of an innovative web-based application called **ShelterLink**, which enables shelters to share their bed availability with partners and eventually, emergency services. Responsible data sharing enables every shelter that participates to become an entry point into the domestic violence system of care—even when a shelter stay is not required.

ShelterLink empowers providers to access capacity data across the city. Domestic violence support staff are encouraged to leverage this information, ensuring that the needs of the caller are met appropriately.

As the two largest domestic violence shelters in Calgary, YW and FearIsNotLove know the importance of collaboration to provide seamless service for women and children at times of great trauma. Both organizations, along with their collaborative partners at Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, Rowan House and Wheatland Crisis Shelter are aligned in a desire to foster innovation in the domestic violence sector and develop resources to meet the complex needs of those seeking shelter.

“Currently, it can be challenging to understand the full picture behind shelter use in our city and province.” Says Sue Tomney, CEO, YW Calgary. “**ShelterLink** will provide us with an accurate perspective of how individuals are accessing shelters and utilizing other support programs.”

In recent months, YW Sheriff King Home and FearIsNotLove’s Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter have noted important trends in request for supports:

- Demand for shelter spaces remains consistently high. Often well over the current bed capacity.
- There was a 15 per cent reduction in requests for shelter space in 2022 at YW and FearIsNotLove, which suggests community outreach and domestic violence prevention programs are working.
- Every individual who contacts shelters seeking help receives the offer of support and resources, even if they do not end up in a shelter or secure temporary accommodations provided by the shelters.

“Both shelters work with each person fleeing or experiencing abuse to ensure the individual and their family can find safe space when needed.” Says Kim Ruse, CEO, FearIsNotLove. “We also know that each person’s experiences and needs are unique. **ShelterLink** will give us clarity about the true community need, which will provide us the information we need to work towards zero turn-aways in Calgary .”

FearIsNotLove and YW have received \$200,000 from the Government of Alberta through the Civil Society Fund to pursue the development of this partnership and enhance the use of **ShelterLink** across



the sector in Calgary. We are grateful for the provincial government's support of this undertaking, as well as the funding increases for women's shelters in Budget 2023 and look forward to providing ongoing insight and information on program and shelter use by women and their families to help address this complex public policy issue.

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About YW Calgary:

YW Calgary focuses on supporting women and their families to thrive, safely and equitably. With the support of our donors, government partners and other social agencies we provide an array of programs and services which focus on preventing incidents of domestic violence and trauma by building knowledge and skills to promote healthy relationships, mental wellness & financial resiliency, all while continuing to offer the critical supports women and their families need. We care about each other, our clients and our community and are driven by the lasting impact we have on women, their families and by extension, their community.

ywcalgary.ca

About FearIsNotLove (new brand evolution & operator of Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter):

FearIsNotLove supports individuals, families and communities to live free from domestic violence and abuse. The agency serves all people to live free from fear, neglect, violence, and abuse through a comprehensive range of innovative programs and services; from prevention and education, to counselling and emergency supports. Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected, supported and loved.

fearisnotlove.ca

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