



Hope Lives Here

NYWS | NEWSLETTER

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WE ARE 25!

A letter from the Executive Director

North York Women's Shelter is celebrating 25 years of empowerment, help, hope and healing in 2009.

After 25 years we have saved over 10,000 lives, yet we will not see the end of violence against women in our lifetime so we have our work cut out for us. Because of our work survivors of violence have more options. Children of abused women have their childhood renewed. Our community has been educated about the impact of domestic violence. We can say with certainty that our work has made a difference.

Our grassroots approach is a cornerstone of our success. Input from users of programs and ideas from shelter staff have kept our programs dynamic, accessible, and accountable to those who use them.

What we do is more than provide safety. From the moment women enter our shelter to when they leave us, our job is to help rebuild their shattered lives and open up a world of possibilities. We offer her the hope of a better tomorrow. We offer a place for survivors to mend bonds – with their children – that have been damaged by abuse. NYWS is not merely a band aid solution it is a place of opportunity and promise.

Our determination to support the healing of women and children who are survivors of violence is made possible by the support of donors, volunteers, and community partners. Over the past 25 years, this ongoing support has been our fortitude.

Sustained by our friends and fuelled by compassion, NYWS will not only continue to offer shelter, safety and support to women and children affected by abuse but will also be at the forefront of anti-violence work. On May 7, 2009 we will be commemorating our 25th anniversary at our Hope Gala. We invite you to join us to celebrate our successes and help build a future.

For information about the gala and for ticket information please email info@hopegala.ca

Sincerely,

Charlene Catchpole, Executive Director



Our wish list

- Baby bottles (glass)
- Crib sheets
- Wash cloths
- Children's Underwear
- Digital thermometers
- Maternity Clothing
- New Pillows
- New Twin Comforters
- Tokens and day passes
- Women's Socks
- Warm Slippers
- Cutlery
- Soap & Shampoo
- Journals
- Gift Certificates

Residents Corner: **Rebuilding lives each day.**

Ludmila and her two children Sasha and Ramón arrived at NYWS with very little hope. She left her controlling and abusive husband in panic after he threatened to take away her children. Ludmila took the abuse and constant belittlement, and even travelled across the world to Malaysia, where she didn't speak the language or understand the customs, to be with her children. Unwilling to lose her children, she eventually found the strength to leave.

After arriving at the shelter, the progress of Ludmila and the children were unmistakable. "I found myself at NYWS. I felt empowered, happy and positive about the future for my children and I" said Ludmila in her departure form. "The workshops and life coaching has been very helpful in giving me a new outlook in life".

She has every reason to feel positive because, with the help of the counsellors, she has a home for her family and was accepted to upgrade her credentials from Russia – a Masters degree in applied Mathematics and Computer Science. The bonds between Ludmila, Sasha and Ramón were strengthened by the shelter's programs aimed at rebuilding the bond between mother and child.

The staff at NYWS saw the fruits of their labour when we saw a still happy and healthy Ludmila, Sasha and Ramón at the shelter's holiday party. "Thank you for giving us the most precious gift of hope" said Ludmila to the all the staff.

Holiday Angels Project Fashion Cares



A third party event by Toronto French School

On a cold Friday in October at the Toronto French School, where bilingual programs and global perspectives are hallmarks of education, the auditorium roared with excited teenagers and parents. The school's fashion show, in its second year, had begun. The students displayed a unique collection of original clothing, with all the garments in the fashion show created and sewn by the students of TFS.

"This year for our school fashion show we have chosen to donate the money we raise as well as the clothing donations we collected for the week before the show to North York Women's Shelter," said grade 12 student and designer Robin Goldhar. "We believe that we can use this opportunity to spread the word about the mental and physical abuse that many women and their children face every day."

The show's theme was "International Runways" - a intermingling of fashion and travel – and it opened with remarks from Shamini Selvaratnam from NYWS. In keeping with the international theme, the show was hosted by an air steward and a stewardess. There were thematic stops at destinations around the world showing formalwear, swimwear and a "fantasy" collection.

The students and staff not only put the show into "fashion show", but also raised over \$3000 for the women and children at NYWS. The donations made an impact in serving the needs of the residents of NYWS.

The 2008 holiday season was made memorable for the women and children because of the overwhelming support of our friends and community. Donations we receive during the holidays also sustain us throughout the year so we thank each and every of you for your support. We especially want to thank our friends at:

Royal Le Page Partners Realty

Woodhaven Country Lodge

OPSEU

United Steelworkers Local 3950

Toronto North Dental Hygienist Society

Altimate boots

Global Day of Giving : Why they stay

XL Insurance companies are a global network of owned operations and partner relationships that provide service to the world's insurance markets with local knowledge and expertise in approximately 100 countries. In 2006 XL commemorated its 20th Anniversary and launched the inaugural Global Day of Giving, dedicated to giving back to the communities in which XL operates.

In 2008, North York Women's Shelter was chosen as XL's recipient of Global Day of Giving, after an application process initiated by Cassandra Toussaint, NYWS' Fundraising and Volunteer Coordinator.



The Global Day of Giving team and their some of their families

40 XL employees and their families divided into five teams – garden, exterior, interior, building and construction, organizing – volunteered on May 21st and 23rd. From the brand new vegetable garden to the newly stained deck on the outside and building shelving and organizing the donation room on the inside the teams did amazing work. In addition to volunteering XL donated much needed items to the shelter.

"The Global Day of Giving is an important opportunity for those of us at XL to take time away from our business lives and give back to the communities in which we live and work" said XL's Heather Cunningham.

XL's Global Day of Giving created more than just two days of volunteering by the company's staff it established a relationship with NYWS. Since May employees have been at the shelter in the fall and winter to assist with large scale jobs. The dedication of the employees and the commitment of XL is key to the ongoing success of NYWS.

It's not uncommon to hear "Why do women stay in abusive relationships?" or "Why don't they leave?" These types of questions, although common, have a tendency—whether unintentional or not—to blame victims and to suggest they enjoy or thrive on being abused. If they didn't enjoy being ill-treated, they would leave, right? Obviously, if they choose to stay, they must have low self-esteem, right?

No. These attitudes are common myths about victims of domestic violence. The fact is that reasons for staying are far more complex than a blanket statement about a victim's character or strength of will.

Often, it is dangerous for a woman to leave an abusive relationship. If her abuser is economically abusive and withholds all family money from her, leaving can lead to additional hardships. Leaving could mean living in fear of being stalked, fear of losing custody of any minor children (parental abduction is not uncommon), losing financial support, and experiencing harassment at work.

Do not underestimate the effects of domestic violence on its victims. Abused women experience isolation, shame, embarrassment, and humiliation. Women may not immediately leave an abusive relationship because:

- * They fear their abusers will become more violent—perhaps fatal—stalking them if they leave.

- * Friends and family may not support their decision to leave.

- * They fear being a single parent with little money.

- * There are periods of calm, nurturing and love between incidents of violence

- * They may be unaware of sources of advocacy and support.

- * They may be unaware of shelters and other resources that offer safety and support.

THIS ANNIVERSARY SHOW
SOMEONE YOU REALLY CARE



NORTH YORK WOMEN'S SHELTER
COMMEMORATES OUR 25TH
ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR

But instead of flowers or fancy gifts we are asking for your dollars. Every dollar you give helps provide safety, shelter and meals to women and children who are fleeing abuse. Help make this anniversary memorable for those who rely on us.

Donate now at www.nyws.ca or 416.635.9427 ext 241



NYWS Thanks You

At North York Women's Shelter, we are privileged to have many dedicated and caring people who continually wish to share their compassion, their knowledge and their time with us. In October 2008, we held a volunteer orientation. It was an opportunity for volunteers to find out more about us in terms of our values, principles and our role in helping women and children rebuild their lives. Volunteers who attended the session left with a better understanding of the issues of violence against women and a sense of social responsibility. Volunteers are integral to the day to day operations of our agency. As a volunteer we would like to engage you in a meaningful relationship because you matter to us – without you our successes would not be possible, thank you.

Why I Volunteer

I have had the utmost pleasure of volunteering at the North York Women's Shelter since May 2007.

The NYWS is a liberating environment that upholds the tenets of diversity and anti-oppression. This organization represents a safe haven for numerous women and children that have successfully escaped the vicious cycle of abuse.

The dedicated staff of the NYWS, strive at great lengths to assure the needs of each resident are addressed. This commitment enables the survivors to go from shattered homes to new beginnings. This transformation is possible because the staff help nourish the psychological and physical well-being of each individual.

It is an institution that cultivates a critical self-awareness and fosters the inner strength of each survivor. It helps provide hope and optimism for those in despair.

I have always aimed to dedicate my life to battling social injustices and volunteering at the NYWS has provided me a platform to facilitate such noteworthy change. The NYWS staff and residents will always hold a dear place in my heart.

Inspired by NYWS Nisha Sandal, is now pursuing a Masters Degree in Social Work at New York University. We wish her best of luck.