



Hope Lives Here

NYWS | NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 | Summer/Fall 2009 | Newsletter of North York Women's Shelter



Did you know?

Your gift of \$10... provides the daily transportation needs of a woman in the shelter.

Your gift of \$20... provides a woman and her child with a healthy and wholesome meal.

Your gift of \$40...helps provide the supplies for a day of recreational programming or a child's birthday celebration.

Your gift of \$80...helps a victim of domestic violence receive one hour of specialized trauma counselling, to address the core issues of self confidence, fear and isolation.

Your gift of \$100... provides moving costs for a family securing their new life in a community

Celebration of 25 Years of Hope and Healing

In September 1984, North York Women's Shelter opened its doors to provide emergency shelter to women and children who had been forced to leave their violent home environment.

For 25 years we have provided programming, counselling, referrals, and assistance to allow our residents to return to the community and live their lives free of violence. When we see women and especially children who were former residents come back to visit us filled with joy and vibrancy, we can honestly say our work has made a difference. Our work is made possible by the support of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, United Way of Toronto, and the tremendous generosity of individuals, organizations, religious and social groups.

Through our 25 years of service we have renewed hope and saved the lives of thousands of women and children. This year is an important milestone and preparations for the Shelter's 25th Anniversary event are underway. We hope you will be able to join us for an afternoon filled with fun and celebration. Our 25th anniversary provides an opportunity to:

- Celebrate our many victories;
- Recognize outstanding individuals who have worked diligently to provide opportunity and a space where women and children can live in safety, free from violence and abuse;
- Broaden our community's commitment to the challenge of recognizing and preventing violence against women and children;

We hope that you can be a part of our celebration on Saturday September 19th, at Banting Avenue Park between 1-4pm.

In solidarity,

Charlene Catchpole, Executive Director

Hope Gala: A night of Joyful Festivities

This year's Hope Gala was an exceptional success and raised much needed funds to help support the women and children at NYWS. "The Gala planning task-force, staff and volunteers truly out did themselves", said Charlene Catchpole, Executive Director.

This year, Sheherazade Hirji was the recipient of the 2009 Hope Award. Ms. Hirji is an eternal optimist whose commitment to women's rights extends beyond Canada. "The impact of Ms. Hirji's contribution is felt by many women and girls throughout Canada and around the globe so we could not think of a better recipient" said Catia Creatura-Amelio, Chair of the NYWS Board of Directors.



Left: Sheherazade Hirji, Hope Award Recipient Right: Catia Creatura-Amelio, Chair NYWS Board of Directors

The Gala, hosted by CTV reporter Galit Solomon, featured lively entertainment from Dancing with the Stars Kids and Arabesque Dance Troupe. The silent and live auction bidding caused friendly bidding wars among our guests, but everyone who attended left with the satisfaction of helping the many women and children at NYWS.

Hope Gala could have been possible without our generous sponsors: **OPSEU, CAW, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Resolution, Equity and Diversity Center at Seneca College, Trade Secrets, Coty Perfumes, Metro, Dove Canada**

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

I am forever grateful to everyone at the North York Women's Shelter for the help and hope they gave me when I felt hopeless. Many angels at NYWS gave me guidance and support when I needed it the most.

I never thought I was going to end up in a shelter. My family were so happy when I got married to a Canadian lawyer and moved to Toronto. They thought I was going to have a good life, but that all changed so quickly. The emotional abuse and belittlement started 4 days after I arrived in Toronto. The change from the good times to the bad was most difficult to come to terms with. I was not sure if this man was the same person I married back in Cameroon. I hardly had a married life. When I was not being yelled at, I was left alone, ignored and in isolation. I thought something was wrong with me. He packed my things several times and threatened to throw me out even though I had no family or friends here. I had no peace and lived in constant fear. Finally, when I was asked to leave my home, I did. I could not take it and I left without a single penny in my pocket. With the help of police officers I arrived at North York Women's Shelter.

When I was at the shelter it was a very difficult emotional time. I thought my pain was never going to end and that I wasn't going to get through it. But I did! The counsellors and everyone at shelter gave me the support I needed to find my own strength. They helped with my language skills, told me about OSAP, helped me find housing and boosted my life. I am proud of my life now. Next year at this time, I will be graduating from college as a practical nurse.

I want to help other women who have gone through the same experience as me. I am strong enough to share my story so that it can help others. For all women that are coping with abusive relationships I say this: You are not alone! Thank you for helping and supporting North York Women's Shelter. Thank you all for giving hope to many women like me. Encore un mot cette fois en français. Je dis merci pour le combat que vous menez pour les femmes en détresses.

Daline's courage was honoured at the 2009 Hope Gala

Words of our Founder

Re-Print from Summer 1984 Newsletter

I am a founding member of the North York Women' Shelter and proud of the fact that I served two terms as President.

I am fifty-eight years old, happily married to Ruby for the past twenty-seven years, and, we have a daughter Susan, who graduated from York University this year.

I had a dream, a dream I shared with many other concerned people. I dreamt a shelter would be found for the women in North York who were experiencing domestic violence, a shelter where battered women would feel safe, where they would know somebody cared. After almost four years of hard work and dedication by many caring individuals I'm very happy to report that my dream has become a reality. The North York Women's Shelter will open its doors to battered women and their children in September 1984.

This dream was important to me because of my own personal experience as a battered wife. After thirty-six years I have not forgotten the total helplessness I felt as a beaten wife, a victim of my former husband's violence and a victim in a society that not only did not care but blamed me for my situation. I helped to show other women that somebody does care.

Only in the past few years has the issue of wife assault been brought to the public's attention. But a great deal of public education will have to be done before family violence even begins to be alleviated. The goal of a Shelter for North York women has been fulfilled and now I plan to study the issues of family violence and teach those who are interested.

I hope my small contribution will help in solving the big social problem of wife assault.

Reta Duenisch
1926 - 2007

Reta was a survivor of abuse and a life long advocate for social justice. After retiring as the President of NYWS, she went to on be advocate for many important issues. She is the founding member of both the Awareness Project on Abuse of the Elderly and the Older Women's Network. She has also campaigned tirelessly to create social housing in Metro Toronto. In 2001 was Reta was honoured by the Government of Ontario for her tireless contribution to the community. She was a truly inspiring woman!

Printing made possible by the generosity of PrintCity.ca



**We offer a promise
of better tomorrow**

I have a dream ~
That my sisters, my mother and I will be free,
we can start fresh and new and put our troubles
away!

I have a dream ~
And my dream is that we can make it on our
own and will not have to live in fear any longer,
we will be able to cleanse our souls,

I have a dream ~
And my dream tells me that I will continue to get
my education and be the best not satisfactory.

I have a dream my friends ~
And in my dream I will get a scholarship and
go to the best university there is, my dream tells
me I need to continue with my education.

Oh yes, I have a dream ~
In this dream I become a pediatrician, the best
darn pediatrician in my field, In this dream I
make my mother extremely proud.

I have a dream ~
That not only will I be the best pediatrician but
I will be the best mother and wife, I will find a
husband that treats me and our children well.

I have a dream ~
That I will be able to send my mother to Jamaica,
Aruba, Barbados, and all the exotic places,
and I will be able to spend a weekend with
my sisters.

I have a dream ~
And that is to make my dream a reality!

*Written by Vicky 13, former resident of
NYWS 10 years ago. Re-print from NYWS
Spring 1999 Newsletter*

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



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The facts are undeniable...

In 1984, 7 women were reported murdered by their current or former partner in Toronto. In 2008, this number has more than doubled to 16 reported deaths of women.

According to a recently released study by Statistics Canada, only one in ten abused women accesses a shelter.

The same report found that approximately 100,000 women and children found safety at women's shelters in the 12 month period beginning April 12, 2005;

Canada's more than 550 shelters for battered women remain full; many with waiting lists;

...support our work

North York Women's Shelter offers important life-saving supports and services to women and children fleeing violence and are committed to working towards the prevention of violence.

NYWS Thanks You

Volunteers are the cornerstone of the work we do at North York Women's shelter. Every year we see more and more dedication and commitment from community organizations and individuals who are passionate about making a difference in the lives of abused women and children.

We are very fortunate to have so many devoted friends/supporters who truly understand the work we do and are willing to help women and children begin their journey of change and hope.

At our Annual General Meeting, in June we had the pleasure of honouring our volunteers. It was a great opportunity to recognize the wonderful contributions of our volunteers and honour the impact of their commitment to our work.

To our volunteers – We thank you for your gift of time! The work that you do is priceless and will forever make a difference in the lives of these women and their children.