

Transitions



WOMEN'S
HABITAT

Women's Habitat Newsletter
ISSUE 17 SUMMER 2015



Our Shelter is Open!

After a year long renovation and a two year long Capital Campaign, we are thrilled to announce Women's Habitat reopened the doors of our emergency shelter on June 8, 2015.

The experience was a moving one for our Board, staff and management team, and, of course, for our clients. "This experience has changed us all." said Julia Fiddes, Shelter Manager, "The positivity that will come from the result of this undertaking is difficult to put into words."

She was right, within the week, our 25 beds were full and women and children were overwhelmed by the shelter's amenities. "It's not at all what I expected a shelter to look like, you hear awful things," says one resident, "but it's so clean and bright, I can't believe it." The new shelter hosts a bright children's playroom, a beautiful industrial capacity kitchen, a fully equipped accessible bedroom and an elevator.

We have so many to thank, our Campaign Cabinet went above and beyond to make this dream a reality; our staff worked tirelessly to see this through to the end, bumps and all; and of course, our generous donors. You believed in our vision and made it a reality and words cannot express our gratitude.

To learn more about our Campaign and to see more photos of the shelter, log on to our website at www.womenshabitat.ca or see some incredible before and after shots on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/WomensHabitat/photos_stream

In this issue

- New Shelter P.1
- A Day at the Beach P.2
- Poverty Reduction P.3
- Micro-enterprise Project P.4
- Girlz Space P.5
- Wrapped in Courage P. 6

"It's not at all what I expected a shelter to look like, you hear awful things," says one resident, "but it's so clean and bright, I can't believe it."

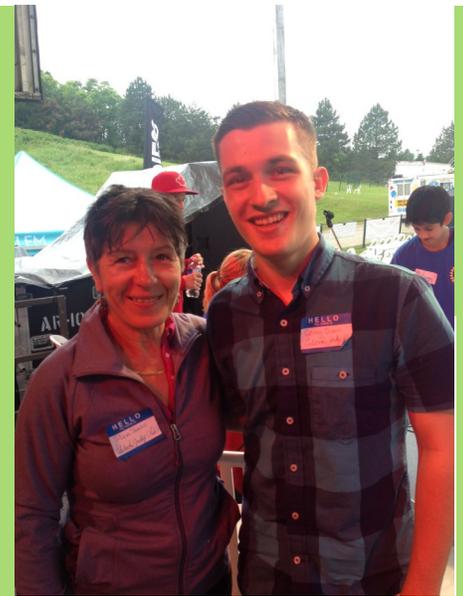
A Day at the Beach

Every year, our amazing outreach staff organize a fun day at Wasaga beach. Clients are invited to relax, soak up some sun and get away from it all. For some of our clients, this was their first time at a beach. Our client Carol* graciously shared with us what the trip meant to her:

"I had a wonderful time going to Wasaga Beach with Women's Habitat. I felt so good, I was happy, I felt accepted. I am usually shy about my legs, bathing suits, but was having so much fun I didn't think about what I looked like. I let go and had fun, no controlling, no yelling, no anger, I had control of my environment and my kids were happy like everyone else. I went swimming, the waves were strong and pushed me so hard, it was funny to be shocked by a wave, beautiful summer day, a bit windy, even cold but so much fun. The ladies were so nice, watching them be so happy showed me how even with a headache, sore legs, needing to use the washroom a hundred times did not matter I was free to be me, I was accepted and loved, thank you ladies and staff at Women's Habitat."

To learn more about our outreach programs and the impact they have on our community, visit womenshabitat.ca/outreach/

*Name has been changed



Summer Fun!

Women's Habitat has been a proud member of the community since 1978 and every year we are fortunate to be invited to the great festivals and events this city has to offer.

Our Executive Director, Silvia Samsa, was a proud judge at this year's Ribfest at Centennial Park, hosted by the Etobicoke Rotary Club (www.rotaryetobicoke.org). Our clients were selling some amazing products on Canada Day at the urban market at Spadina and Bremner, and we launched our '140 Reason to Give' (womenshabitat.ca/news/womens-habitat-supporters-share-their-reason-to-give/) Campaign at ShoreFest hosted by the Lakeshore Village BIA.

Look out for us this summer and beyond and be sure to stop by and say hi!

A More Prosperous City for Us All

Women's Habitat has been front and centre at City Hall over the past few months. As discussions have been taking place on poverty reduction strategies for the City, we have partnered with Scadding Court Community Centre (www.scaddingcourt.org) to ensure these strategies are addressing the specific needs of women and their children.

Poverty affects women in very specific ways, and these effects are more pronounced for those who are caregivers, newcomers, have mental health or disability challenges, or are members of other equity-seeking groups. Women who are survivors of violence are particularly vulnerable.

We conducted rounds of engagement with the 250+ women who confirmed that the top three issues the City must address to make meaningful impact in reducing and alleviating poverty are: 1) access to good jobs; 2) safe, affordable, quality housing and; 3) affordable, flexible, local childcare. The barriers women face compound each other and an effective poverty reduction strategy must address their interconnectedness.

On July 7th the City voted to adopt the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The strategy is now in the third and final phase, and Women's Habitat and our partners will be holding a number of final community consultations to provide input for the final strategy which will be submitted to the Executive Committee and the City Council this fall.

For more information on the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy visit: www.povertyreductionto.ca/



“Poverty affects women in very specific ways, and these effects are more pronounced for those who are caregivers, newcomers, have mental health or disability challenges, or are members of other equity-seeking groups. Women who are survivors of violence are particularly vulnerable.”

Toronto Women's Collective Pop-Up Shop

- ▶ *Handmade and Imported items*
- ▶ *New and Vintage clothing*
- ▶ *And much more!*

Minto WestSide Market
Bathurst & Front
July – October 2015
Open daily at 12:00pm



Visit us on social media

Twitter: [TOWmnCollective](#)

Facebook: [Toronto Women's Collective](#)

Instagram: [torontowomenscollective](#)

Email: torontowomenscollective@gmail.com

This new initiative supports women to transition out of poverty by providing low income, marginalized women surviving violence the opportunity to develop the necessary business skills and experience to make a better life for themselves.

Toronto Women's Collective: a micro-enterprise project

Thanks to a generous grant from United Way Toronto, Women's Habitat and Scadding Court Community Centre have partnered to implement an exciting new initiative that complements the City's commitment to developing a poverty reduction strategy for Toronto. This new initiative supports women to transition out of poverty by providing low income, marginalized women surviving violence the opportunity to develop the necessary business skills and experience to make a better life for themselves. Through this partnership we are offering a small group of women the opportunity to participate in a unique collaborative micro-enterprise project by way of pop-up market. Women will work to gain the range of entrepreneurial skills necessary for success including production, administration and retailing. The pop-up market will be open until mid-October 2015, with the possibility of extension. The container market is located in the Minto West Side Market, at Bathurst Street and Niagara Street. Many of the women involved in the project are already skilled artisans. Items include handmade crafts, unique jewellery, clothing, fashion accessories, décor and gift items. If you are looking for one-of-kind items, come check us out!



Support for our Girlz Space Summer Camps

Every year, Women's Habitat offers Girlz Space Summer Camps to young women in the community who would otherwise not have the opportunity to go to camp. The camps provide an opportunity to connect with one another, gain leadership skills and have fun. Topics include critical thinking, problem solving, career exploration, communication, stress management, self-esteem and healthy relationships.

The support from community partners has been instrumental in the development and delivery of these summer camps.

This year, we want to acknowledge the contribution of: The Toronto Calcutta Foundation; the founding sponsor of the Girls Leadership Camp. Thanks to their support, camp participants acquired skills to become leaders in their communities.

The Kingsway-Lambton United Church. The church has been supporting our clients since 2003 and this year they generously contributed to support the Girlz Space Camp for girls ages 11-13.

Fanny and Robert Laverty. Long standing donors and agency supporters, their backing of this year's Girlz Space Camp was a tremendous assistance to us.

On behalf of the girls of Girlz Space, our staff and volunteers, thank you very much for the great memories.

Our Girlz Space programs happen year-round! Learn more at womenshabitat.ca/outreach/programs-for-youth/





KEEP IN TOUCH!

Follow us on Twitter



@womenshabitat



Facebook /
womenshabitat



Instagram

@womenshabitat

ISSUE 17 SUMMER 2015

Wrapped in Courage

November is Woman Abuse Awareness Month. During the month of November, shelters across the province are engaging their communities and spreading the word about violence against women and its devastating impacts. On average 20-30 women a year are murdered in the province of Ontario alone. It is the number two reason for calls to the emergency police services and its effects on children are overwhelming.

We are joining our sisters at shelters across the province and inviting everyone to step up and show abused women that they have our support. The United Nations has designated November 25th (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) as the first of 16 Days of Action to eliminate violence against women across the world. We are asking Ontarians to wear our purple scarf especially on these days to show abused women and their children that their community supports them and they are not alone. To order your purple scarves for \$15 contact Lina Almanzan lalmanzan@womens-habitat.ca

Women's Habitat of Etobicoke

140 Islington Avenue
Etobicoke, ON M8V 3B6

416-252-7949 ph

416-252-1520 fax

416-252-0361 TTY

416-252-5829 CRISIS LINE 24/7

www.womenshabitat.ca

