



Interval House of Ottawa Spring Newsletter

Spring / Summer 2010

A New Home

Interval House of Ottawa is beginning a new chapter in its storied history this year and we are excited to share our news with you! On January 29, 2010, it was announced that our shelter would be granted \$3,050,000 to replace our current location with a new facility.



Left, Karen MacInnis, Exec. Dir.; Centre, Yasir Naqvi, MPP; Right, Minister Madeliene Mellieur

Since 1979 we have resided at our downtown location and we have thrived. Over the last 30 or so years we have renovated and retrofitted our existing infrastructure in an attempt to make our home more

welcoming and to create more space for our residents. At this point in time we have exhausted our ability to increase the capacity of our current location.



Joan Hight, IHO Board President

With this in mind, we applied to the Provincial government for a new shelter that would improve our accessibility, increase our capacity for growth and allow for a more family-friendly facility (i.e., less stairs!). We were delighted to be approved for the development of our new shelter.

The next year will be very busy but incredibly rewarding. Our staff, volunteers and residents are looking forward to the changes ahead, holding the memories of our past dear to our hearts as we move into our future.

We hope that we can continue to count on your commitment to the work of Interval House of Ottawa. It is your support that allows us to continue to meet the needs of the abused women and their children who reach out to us, looking for a safe home with all of the services and supports necessary to begin new lives free from violence. It is hoped that our new shelter will be able to help even more of our most vulnerable populations.

Should you wish to find out more information about our new shelter and how you can help, please contact us at 613-234-8511. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your continued support!



Left, Karen MacInnis; Minister Mellieur; Yasir Naqvi; Right, Joan Hight

Inside This Issue:

I'm a Woman! I am Real! 2

In Love and In Danger 2

Violence Knows No Bounds 3

The Joy of Movement 4

Wish List 4

The photographs used in this publication are for illustrative purposes only. They are generic pictures from clipart (unless otherwise identified).

I'm a Woman! I am Real!



I am a woman first. I am
A person equally!
Don't accuse me of blurting
Out blind statements,
Then bully and intimidate me
Into seeing the world
through
Your eyes only.
I am real. I am unique!

I am a woman. I have
purpose!
The road I have struggled
on, the
Growth I have made, and the
Person I have become qualify.
Don't patronize me,
belittle me or
Ridicule me. You may
never Walk my path.
I am real. I am strong!

I am a woman. I have passion!
Don't worship me on some altar
With trinkets, toys and distance;
For I am not a god.
Kiss me with your hunger. Hold
Me with your passion. Love me
With your drive.
I am real. I have desires!

I am a woman. My heart is

tender!
Let me laugh. For now I can. Let
me
Cry when my heart breaks. For it
Hurts. Let me empathize
For my fellow man. That is who I
am.
Don't stab me in the back with
Your insecurities and thinly veiled
Sarcasm.
I am a woman. I celebrate all
Life's emotions!

I am woman. I am mine own!
My name is not on any bill of sale.
I am not a puppet on strings.
Nor can you shape me in clay.
My emotions require respect.
My body is to be loved.
I am not yours to
Manipulate.
I am a woman. I am not a slave!

I am a woman. I have
individuality!
You cannot mold me into
The person you need.
Nor will I return to being like
her. She is not
Who God has created me to be.
I will not live in the sin of the lie
You want me to be.

I am a woman. I am God's
beloved!

I am a woman!
I have a mind!
I am a woman!
I am strong!

I am a woman!
I am an individual!

I am a woman!
I am God's beloved!

I am a woman!
I have desires!

I am a woman!
I command respect!

I am a woman!
I have emotions!

I am a woman!
I have rights!

I am a woman!
I have legs!

I am a woman!
I have chosen to use them!!

-a Survivor Story

In Love and In Danger

The In Love and In Danger program was developed as a collaboration between Family Services Ottawa, the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board in an effort to bring awareness to the issue of dating violence among youth. The main focus is to "stop the violence before it begins."

Interval House of Ottawa is a proud member of the In Love and In Danger committee and recently took part in the program's annual Spring Conference. Approximately one hundred high school students and adult supporters from the Ottawa area attended this event which showcased recent anti-violence campaigns led by Ottawa-area youth. From white ribbon campaigns, reading statistics over morning announcements, creating videos and literature—students reaffirmed their commitment to bringing awareness to the issue of dating violence. It was truly incredible to witness the compassion and depth of understanding exhibited by some of our younger community members!

To learn more about the In Love and In Danger program, please visit the following website: www.familyservicesottawa.org/english/ilid.html.



Thank you for
your continued
support! We are
truly grateful for
your generosity
and compassion.

Violence Knows No Bounds



You never think it will happen to you. You never think the horrible things on Law and Order or CSI could ever happen. It wouldn't happen to me. No, I'm smarter than that. I'm stronger than that. I know what I would do. Really?

I was vulnerable... just out of a vacant marriage with two children. I was a successful business woman, educated, smart, confident. I was also looking to be loved and to be beautiful to someone. I had a void to fill... and there he was. He'd been through it, so why should I do it alone, was what he said. I believed him. I trusted him. I even decided to work with him.

At first, it was verbal abuse. They were short outbursts... loud and in my face. The volume changed over time, as he changed, but the emotionally abusive messages were still the same: everything from him thinking I was cheating or flirting or attracting attention in a negative way, to him telling me that he could have anyone he wanted at anytime... but I was his dream girl, the perfect one for him, his last chance at love, even his gift from God.

At it's best, the relationship was pure passion: loving, great communication, sensitivity, affection, support and everything that goes with it. At his worst, I was an object... to be controlled and manipulated: stirring fears that I would be out extra income, that he'd trash my reputation through my email contacts, and that I was someone other than I knew me to be. He questioned my character, my parenting, my work ethic and professionalism... all very covert and undermining. It was enough to get under my skin and make me crazy for no 'apparent' reason.

Why didn't I leave the relationship sooner? It's not like we lived together, or had children or a business together. The good was really good, and it was everything I wanted. But the bad was really bad. I came to realize that I am a compassionate forgiver: love the sinner, hate the sin. I didn't know how to say, "I forgive you" without "I excuse your behaviour" or "I trust you again", and so I found myself in an on-again-off-again cycle that began to affect every part of my life.

I did finally end it. 3 months ago. I realized I deserved to be treated better. I realized that I was successful before him, and I could be successful again after him. I was doing really well after breaking up, too. Oh, but anytime we talked, mostly due to unfinished work, he thought that door was wide open for him to walk through. He was miserable without me,



I'm the only woman he ever loved, he changed so much because of me, he even found God and was working on becoming a better person. He wanted to prove it all to me. It was really all about him.

So I trusted him one last time... as friends... and it almost cost me my life. We met, arriving separately, in a public place. He got there first, and spiked my drink. I was chewing gum, and didn't notice a taste change in my pop. Next thing I knew, I was too intoxicated to do anything, so he had to drive me home. I don't remember much. I know I turned him down twice for sex, he muttered for about an hour as I tried to sleep that I was doing these horrible things while we were broken up, then he decided to leave in the middle of the night. I heard him, woke up, and confronted him... realizing how he manipulated the evening, manipulated me for his own satisfaction, his own gain, his

own power. And then he did the thing I never, ever believed he would do. He hurt me... bad. He totally controlled the situation, even preventing me from getting to a phone or running out of my house. I became a prisoner in my own house.

A second attack occurred 30 minutes later... no warning. It was his last power play: he wanted me to know that he could kill me. He suddenly came at my throat and choked me for almost 20 seconds. I made myself fall so I could loosen his grip enough to whisper what he needed to hear: "It's my fault, I'm sorry." I didn't believe it... I still don't believe it: it was never my fault. He finally left me alone for a minute and I snuck a call to 911 on my cell. The police came quickly after. They agreed: it was not my fault, and they arrested him.

That was a week ago. If it wasn't for the programmes in this city: for the 24 Crisis Line, the Victim Crisis unit with Ottawa Police, the support groups, my counsellor, my family, and my friends, I know I would not get through this. He tried to kill me. How do I deal with that?! How do I keep working, take care of my children, make other people feel good, give all I give or do all I do? It's one day at a time. It's knowing that I have resources to help me heal and places where I will be protected and safe. It's having a hope in a violent world where most women like me have no hope... no hope to leave, no hope to end the hurt, no hope to stop the pain, no hope to live another day.

We need to be hope for each other... everyone of us. Why? Because you never think it's going to happen to you.

-A Survivor Story



The Joy of Movement

The Children's Program staff recently attended a workshop held by Hannah Beach who has created a series of books called *I Can Dance*. Hannah Beach is the founding director of the Dandelion Dance Company which is a "dance company for young women that explores social issues through movement. She founded and directs Tournesol Dance, a school of interpretive movement for children."

The *I Can Dance* program is now part of our programming at Interval House of Ottawa! Two nights a week the children dance their feelings out. The program is structured according to the *I Can Dance* books and CD's which help our children understand the importance of movement and how dance can help us feel better, both physically and emotionally. We start by making sure the children understand that there is no right or wrong way to dance. At first the children are often hesitant to really let loose but once the music starts going and the lessons begin they express themselves in ways that they may not have known they could before! This program is a wonderful addition to our Children's programming and we are delighted with the joy dance brings to the lives of our kids!



Our Wish List: Realizing Our Dream

With the construction of our new shelter, we will be relying on our community to help us *furnish* our new home.

We are hoping to create a space that is both accessible, beautiful and functional for both our staff and residents. In order to turn this house into a home, we are looking for the following new items:

- Durable bed frames
- Vinyl mattresses
- Round dining tables and chairs
- Bookcases
- Shelving units
- Storage units
- Accessories
- Desks
- Desk Chairs
- Dressers
- Lamps (standing and table sized)
- Lounging chairs
- Sofas



If you or your organization would like to donate to Interval House and/or sponsor a room to be furnished, please contact Karen or Laura at 613-234-8511 for more details.

Thank you for your continued support! We look forward to hearing from you in the coming months.

Established in 1976, Interval House of Ottawa is a non-profit twenty bed residence that provides safe shelter for women and children fleeing abuse.

Interval House of Ottawa is committed to ending the cycle of violence and to empowering women and children who are victims of family violence. We provide emergency shelter for women and their children fleeing abusive relationships, and offer crisis intervention and prevention services, advocacy for victims and education about family violence for both victims of violence and the community at large.

Charity Registration #: 107513145RR001

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