



From the Executive Director

Hello again!

Having attended our 4th Annual - and very successful - Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® on September 18th and our 33rd Annual General Members Meeting (AGM) on September 26th, it must mean that fall is here! Where does the time go? Thank you to all of the good men that came out and walked that mile around Victoria Park! And thank you to those who joined me at the AGM to 'take care of business' and to hear an inspiring presentation by Allison Dunn of World Literacy Canada.

As always, there is good news to share:

My spring message included news about the Ministry of Attorney General's (MAG) funding announcement for a new support program to help victims of domestic violence through the difficult process of separation and/or divorce. Well, Women's Community House, partnering with Women's Rural Resource Centre (Strathroy), Zhaawanong/Atlohsa, Across Languages, Carrefour des Femmes, London Abused Women's Centre, Mediation Centre, Merrymount, Reseau des Femmes, Victim's Services of Middlesex, and the Victim/Witness

A Real Story...

by A. Martin

I started my 20's in a marriage full of abuse and control.

I held a visible position here in London and had worked hard for my career. It was very important to me so, concerned with my reputation and wanting to maintain my pride, I hid the abuse from everyone, including friends and family.

On evenings when the police department came to our home to investigate noise complaints, I simply denied any problem. I still recall the look of pity in one officer's face, yet I didn't have the courage to go against my husband. The retribution terrified me.

On occasion, I would call the Women's Community House helpline. I remember calling one time in particular, as I had been kicked down a flight of stairs the previous day and needed to talk to someone. The kind social worker on the other line was very patient. She let me know there was a way out, and that they could provide it. However, I was too ashamed to go to a shelter, still in denial that I was one of "those women".

Assistance Program submitted a proposal for funding. I am proud to report that we were successful and will be hiring a "Family Court Support Worker" in the near future. Additionally, we will be hiring a part-time position to help us put in place the volunteer infrastructure to support what we believe will be an exceptionally busy program.

We are thrilled with our "souped-up" new website that went live this spring. Please visit us at www.shelterlondon.org when you have a moment. As always, we would appreciate your comments and feedback! A big shout out to SEED for their brilliant work on the website and to Laurie, our Development Assistant, who manages it all with grace and an infectious smile!

Have you had an opportunity to drop by our store, Mine 101, yet? Rachele, the Store Manager, would love to see you pop-in and browse our "previously enjoyed, pre-washed, gently worn, recycled, revived, affordable hand-me-ups for women and men". Also available are handbags, belts and shoes to accessorize the fantastic clothing! There is absolutely something for everyone at our store, and we are very excited to welcome back our frequent Fanshawe and UWO student shoppers! Please remember that the revenue generated from the store sales goes into supporting the much-needed children's programs at Women's Community House!

Until we connect again next spring, be safe and happy!

Peace,
Kate Wiggins
Executive Director

The fear gripped me.

After the violence began to escalate, I came up with a plan to flee while my husband was at work one day. As I was packing my first suitcase, I heard the front door slam so hard it splintered the frame. Let's just say that day was the most terrifying of my life, and I will never forget it.

That was a long time ago. My one regret was that I didn't use the Women's Community House and the services available. I do, however, know those talks on the phone were what gave me the courage I needed.

I am quite involved in the London community and I sometimes meet other women who are in abusive situations and need someone to talk to. I no longer hide what I once went through as I hope it will motivate others. I am a survivor and not a statistic.

I'm happy to say I have been able to talk some women into calling Women's Community House. Women need to know there is somewhere that they can turn and that they can hold their head up high.



Women's Community House

Providing safe places
and services for
abused women and
their children

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WCH video on website
a look inside the shelter

Research us at
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COMMUNIQUE

Women's Community House

NEWSLETTER



Issue 2-11



Grand House Party 9 LEGENDS of SOUL and R&B

L to R:
Katalin Kiss, Kathryn Rose, Rique Franks,
Neil Donell, and Jean Meilleur - backed
by members of the Jeans 'n Classics
Band - pouring out the "Soul" at Grand
House Party 9

Grand House Party 9 was good for the soul - and for the R&B - not to mention the "celebrity" red carpet treatment!

A near sold-out house was treated to two hours of entertainment with a capital 'E' with performances by Jean Meilleur, and guest artists Neil Donell, Rique Franks, Katalin Kiss and Kathryn Rose.

Special guests in the audience included London legend of the 60's and 70's era concert and music promoter Nick Panaseiko and hair wizard Willy Hancox, who was the first to introduce London to unisex hair styling in 1971 with Head Hunters.

Grand House Party 10 is slated for June 14, 2012 and will feature ten vocalists, a string and horn section and the Grand House Band with music director Peter Brennan. Our 10th promises to be the biggest and the best yet! Mark your calendars now!



Annual General Meeting

The night of September 26th was dull and rainy, but inside the London Music Club, located at 470 Colborne Street, the atmosphere was warm and inviting as Board members, staff, and volunteers from Women's Community House (WCH) joined by community partners, our representative from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, two founding members of WCH, and donors gathered for the 33rd Annual General Members Meeting (AGM). With the business portion of the meeting completed, guest speaker Allison Dunn, a brave and passionate woman, shared stories about her experiences in India regarding literacy and women's issues. Please take a few moments to visit the World Literacy Canada website (www.worldlit.ca) and to watch Allison's YouTube video (Curriculum Development) at www.youtube.com/user/worldliteracycanada.

Consider joining us at next year's AGM on September 24th, 2012.



I N T H I S I S S U E

Grand House Party 9
Annual General
Meeting

Area Men See "Red"
CAW/TCA "Fore"
Women's Shelters

Community
Corner

From the Executive
Director
A Real Story

London and area men...



see RED

Mayor Joe Fontana, Ed Holder plus another 80 or so sponsored London and area men 'saw red' in downtown London on September 18th - red high heels, that is - and for some, red blisters as they took part in the 4th annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes®.

Starting at Centennial Hall with the Mocha Oriental Band leading the way, participants lapped once around Victoria Park and back to the Hall to prove they were man enough to walk a mile in high heels. Walkers raised over \$40,000 this year for Women's Community House (WCH) through team and individual pledges.

In 2001, California started the symbolic gesture of men marching in female footwear to better understand the experience of women in Van Nuys and to raise money for women's shelters and rape crisis centers. Since then, the Walk has caught on in Canada and around the world. WCH brought the Walk to London in 2008 and the event has now raised \$154 thousand.

Thanks to all the Walkers who participated in this year's Walk and to all who supported the event through financial pledges and through moral support the day of the Walk.



CAW/TCA all 'fore' women's shelters

The 5th annual Bob White Charity Classic teed off August 29th despite the possible ripple effect of a shaky global economy and the looming closure of the St. Thomas Ford Assembly plant.

Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union president Ken Lewenza and long-time CAW president Bob White hit the links with other union members and supporters at the Forest City National Golf Club to raise \$50 thousand for Women's Community House (WCH) and \$25 thousand for Domestic Abuse Services Oxford (DASO). DASO is the abused women's shelter in Woodstock, Bob White's home town. WCH Executive Director termed this year 'another phenomenal golf tournament with our CAW friends'.

The CAW is not only dedicated to fighting for workers rights at the bargaining table, it has been a leading voice and activist on the issue of violence against women.

Bob Nickerson and his steering committee of union members and other retirees organize the annual fundraiser that has been successful in raising \$503 thousand to date. Women's Community House greatly appreciates your commitment to organizing this golf tournament and your generosity in supporting our work with abused women and their children.

The 6th annual Bob White Charity Classic is planned for August 27, 2012 at the prestigious Robbie Robinson golf course - Craigowan, The Oxford Golf & Country Club.

COMMUNITY CORNER

Women's Community House continues to celebrate all that our community does to support us in various ways throughout the year and through all the seasons.

Serve London Group

Serve London is a group of youth from across North America who spend a week of their vacation time serving London community organizations in a variety of activities. Women's Community House has had the fortune of being a part of the Serve London project for 3 years now. These energetic young people have worked at 3 of our sites doing yard work, cleaning, painting and providing recreational activities for the children. We are truly grateful to these young people for their service to us.



Group doing yard work at SSH.

'Our Community' Garden

Red tomatoes, yellow and green peppers, a vegetable garden to behold! That's exactly what was growing in the Clarke Shelter's backyard this summer. An idea for our very own veggie garden was birthed from a discussion about community gardens in the City. The idea caught on and the excitement stirred as a staff member referred us to Dianne Clark, Parks and Recreation Manager for the City of London. Dianne was very helpful as was the Horticultural Society of London who also connected us with Master Gardeners of London. With this great support and the fabulous assistance of a few of the WCH support staff and City of London volunteers, we were able to get the ground worked up and the garden planted.



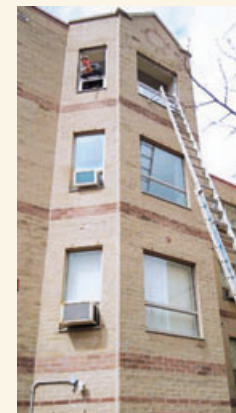
And as the rains fell and the temperatures warmed, we were successful with our vegetable garden project. How wonderful for our residents to have 'home-grown' veggies while residing in a shelter environment. Thank you to everyone who helped along the way with this garden.

DoGoodStore.com

Shop at DoGoodStore.com and turn your buying power into giving power. DoGoodStore.com is a marketing and fund-raising program that benefits charities and registered non-profit organizations in Canada. *How it works:* You purchase a product(s) from DoGoodStore.com and select Women's Community House (WCH) as the benefactor charity, and WCH receives 50% of the retail profit of that item(s). Start shopping today!!

Supporting Women's Community House

What would Women's Community House be without the nuts and bolts behind the scenes? There is a group of dedicated and talented support staff who work to ensure that the shelters and Second Stage Housing are well maintained, safe and welcoming environments for the hundreds of women, children, staff, volunteers and visitors who cross our thresholds every year.



Window replacement at SSH

Each year, Women's Community House is able to make major improvements to the properties and this year we were able to replace all of the windows and some of the hall flooring at the Second Stage Housing site through the generous funding from CMHC (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation). We also received additional funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services to replace all kitchen and bathroom cabinets throughout the SSH building and for elevator renovations. Managing a large project like this one takes finesse, patience and team work, not to mention the need to complete the finishing touches. We hope to plan an Open House and Tea at Second Stage Housing sometime in November to show off our new look.



Karen Brock painting the SSH hallway

Stellar Garage Sale

London's Royal LePage Triland participated in the Royal LePage National Garage Sale for Shelter for the first time this year and were pleased to raise over \$5,000 for Women's Community House, their designated shelter charity. Nationally, Royal LePage offices raised over \$420,000 at the sale! Locally, on May 14th, the parking lot of the London St. Thomas Association of REALTORS (LSTAR) was used to display donations that were collected for a couple of

months before in anticipation of the garage sale. Major partner AMJ Campbell Atlas Van Lines picked up donations for the sale, stored the goods, and delivered them to the site on sale day. It was an overwhelming success with an estimated 1,000+ people coming through to take advantage of the bargains. Committee members Kelley McIntyre, Melanie Pearce, Matt Santigapita, Peter Hess and Mike Carson had plenty of help from other sales people at the Royal LePage Triland office and it made for a great day for all! For more information on the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation, go to www.royallepage.ca/en/community/shelter_foundation/index.aspx. Women's Community House is very grateful for the support of the Royal LePage Shelter Foundation. Hats off to Royal LePage Triland for your amazing efforts and for the huge success of your first garage sale as part of the Royal LePage National Garage Sale for Shelter.

All Our Sisters 2011 First Canadian Forum on Housing and Safe Communities for Women

The United Nations has told Canada that it is not doing enough to address women's poverty and homelessness, and made several recommendations to the provincial and federal governments in 2008.

It was at about this time that a small community of women in London began to talk about bringing women together from across the country to develop action plans for housing and safe communities for women; to hear of successful gender-specific, diverse solutions; participate in creative action-oriented workshops and to foster collaboration between women with lived experience, service providers, researchers and activists. After 3 years of solid work, the Forum came to fruition with over 500 participants from across the country. Women's Community House played a significant role in making this event happen.



All Our Sisters Display



"Umbrella full of wishes for housing and safe communities for women" developed by Joanna Bedgood and Shelley Yeo during their workshop presentation at the Forum