



# Huron Women's Shelter

Summer 2011



24 HOUR CRISIS LINE

1.800.265.5506

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### NOW NEEDED

## Huron Women's Shelter, Second Stage Housing & Counselling Services

Please send your comments,  
questions or concerns to:

Huron Women's Shelter  
376 Huron Road, Box 334,  
Goderich, ON N7A 4C6

Contact us by phone at: 519.524.5333  
24 Hour Crisis Line: 1.800.265.5506

Visit our website at:

[www.huronwomensshelter.com](http://www.huronwomensshelter.com)



**A  
MESSAGE  
FROM THE  
EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR:  
MICHELE  
HANSEN**

As I write this report for the Annual General Meeting I am aware that this is my 20th report as Executive Director. It is with pride that I acknowledge the great work of our dedicated staff, the hard working Board of Directors and the support of the community at large. It is an immense privilege to lead this organization. Day in and day out we have the opportunity to bare-witness to the courage of the women and children we serve. We do not take this role of witnessing lightly. To bare-witness to the pain and suffering of others is to be engaged in the art of creating a healing presence. Our dedicated staff provide a healing presence; they are consciously and compassionately in the present moment with each woman, believing in and affirming her potential for wholeness wherever she maybe in life at that very moment. The following report will chronicle a statistical representation of the work of the organization, but make no mistake the numbers represent work that is healing and profound.

I want to acknowledge the support of the community in the work to end violence against women and children. Individuals and groups provide much needed financial support. On a daily basis, people stop by with donations of clothing, food and household items, we could not meet budget without this kind of support. The community of professionals that work with us, particularly our Domestic Assault Review Team (D.A.R.T.) members are superb allies and we celebrate the great work we do together. This past year D.A.R.T. has been very active and engaged in excellent case review; actively working to ensure that victims are safer and perpetrators are held accountable. The first Men of Integrity awards dinner was a resounding success. Congratulations to Melody Tigani and to Jeff Sabin for their stellar work on this important community awareness project.

Now to the numbers: over the past fiscal year the emergency shelter housed a total of 75 individual women and 51 children in 3278 resident days; computing to an occupancy rate of 89.8% over the entire year. Our team of Full-time Crisis Counsellors; Sharon Rivard, Susan Taylor and Mercedes Piñas assisted by a great roster of Relieve Crisis Counsellors, answered 2776 crisis and support calls, 2886 inter-agency calls and 2385 business calls. Our residential Program Manger, Melody Tigani, provided 180 individual counselling appointments and 217 hours of advocacy including court support. Our Children's Worker at the emergency shelter, Connie McAdam, provided 170 counselling appointments with women, 528 appointments with children, and 53 hours of advocacy and over 27 group sessions. Our shelter Support Worker, Amy Whyte, provided 475 hours of house management, 402 hours at front line and 55 hours of child care.

Our Outreach Counsellor Advocate, Shari MacDonald, provided 378 individual counselling appointments, 46 hours of client advocacy, and drove 17,233 kilometres throughout Huron County. Shari provided 39 group meetings both at the emergency shelter for women in residence as well as groups in the community.

Our Sexual Assault Counsellor Advocate, Blanche Savage, provided 498 appointments in person for women who have experienced sexual assault, many of these women are adult survivors of childhood sexual assault. Blanche also provided 67 telephone appointments, 24 hours of client advocacy, 16 group sessions and she drove 4,981 kilometres, thus ensuring that women all across Huron County had access to this very important service.

Our three Second Stage Housing sites provided independent living in rent-gear-to-income apartments for 37 individual women and 37 children and posted an occupancy rate of 72.60 over the fiscal year. It is important to note that the occupancy rate was lowered as some major energy savings upgrades were applied to units as they became empty. The time it took to complete the up-grades had an effect on the occupancy rate. Our Second Stage Housing Manager, Gertie Gerrits, provided 317 hours of transitional support meetings with women and 47 hours of support by phone. Gertie also provided 577 hours of administrative support to the agency. Our Housing and Transitional Support Worker, Arletta Hallahan, provided 311 counselling appointments to women in person and 71 phone appointments. One of the challenges of providing services at three second stage sites is moving staff from site to site; Arletta clocked 3,970 kilometres of travel this past fiscal year. Krista Everly, our Second Stage Support Worker provided 409 hours of direct support to women at second stage. Kelly Campbell, our Children's Community Support Worker, provided 367 individual counselling appointments with children and 243 appointments to moms.

The statistical accounting is important, but it is as important to say that the staff group provide services to women and children with the greatest of skill, care and compassion. The level of respect that is provided to each and every woman and child is a wonder to behold. The basic premise of our work is to increase the dignity and self worth of each individual we serve, and the staff group embody this tenant every hour of every day.

The Board of Directors has once again provided the important governance necessary to successfully run a not-for-profit agency. The Board committed a great deal of time and effort to celebrate the 25th anniversary of services to women in Huron County last October. We were privileged to have Allistar MacLeod as our guest presenter at our Harvesting Memories Luncheon. Also at the event we were pleased to hear from Julie Lee, former Executive Director. It was an event that honoured both past Board Members and Staff. There was much to celebrate and celebrate we did! The Board has been actively engaged in our annual fund raising efforts, volunteering at the Festival of Arts and Crafts, organizing golf tournaments, and the 5K run. Their efforts make it possible for us to meet our fund raising goals.

Sadly, we say good bye to former Board President Carol McDonnell. Carol has served the board for two full terms. She was active on the Fund Raising Committee and held positions on the Executive Committee. We thank Carol for sharing her many talents and wish her well as she finds new volunteer work, as we know she will.

Lastly I want to acknowledge the women and children we work with day in and day out. From them we witness courage and bravery, and we learn true humility. It is to them I dedicate this report.

*Sincerely,  
Michele Hansen*

Please visit [www.huronwomensshelter.com](http://www.huronwomensshelter.com) to explore our website. We also welcome your feedback, questions, and suggestions for future content.

# HWS CRISIS LINE OFFERS 24-HOUR SUPPORT

Someone is always there for you at the Huron Women's Shelter—a frontline worker—24 hours a day via the Crisis Line at 1-800-265-5506. Some calls are only a few minutes and others are more than an hour. Some people only need to call once and others call several times over a period of time, building trust and confidence with the crisis line workers. No matter what the length or time of a call, the HWS Crisis Line is a touchstone of support for women in crisis.

"When somebody calls us our first priority is to assess safety—do they need police, an ambulance. Then we delve into more specifics. We assess the needs—do they need to come in for safety, residency support, or do they need support in the home, or do they need to connect with someone else in the community. Safety is the number one priority," says Susan Taylor, Crisis Line worker.

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*"We need to be that strong rock to say there is somebody out there for you and if it is not me I know who it is"*

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Staffed by three full-time professional responders, Taylor, Sharon Rivard and Mercedes Pinas, and with the assistance of 9 relief staff, your call is always answered! If you call in, it is not necessary for you to identify yourself. A Crisis Line staff member will ask you for your first name, so that they can put a name to your story, and notes are taken in case you call back. That way you don't have to repeat your story over and over.

"We do log the stories and we can pick up with someone if they call again. If it is a safety issue, we do ask for a name and address so that we can send help if needed. Often if a woman says she needs help— if she is being assaulted—she is often very agreeable to giving me her name and address so that we can send help," says Taylor.

While the Crisis Line is essentially for emergencies, when the lines are open workers can field other types of calls for help. Sometimes they can give referrals for housing, Ontario Works, or help in finding a job.



**CRISIS LINE WORKER, SUSAN TAYLOR**

"Sometimes we support women who are preparing to leave abusive partners or are staying and need help coping. Addiction issues are cropping up a lot—drugs, alcohol or self-harming behaviours. There is just a lack of resources for that. So we do liaise with the Goderich Hospital on this issue," adds Taylor.

Taylor and the other Crisis Line workers deal with anything stemming from domestic violence related issues— emotional, physical, mental and financial. The intention is support for crisis issues. Huron Women's Shelter is the softer landing as we help women transition back into the community. Usually these addictions are related to domestic violence issues either in childhood or later in life. Often mental health issues also occur—mental health issues are magnified in women who have experienced domestic abuse. They can receive community referrals to help them deal with depression, anxiety, and self-harming behaviours.

Other times calls come from people in a household, or from people who are friends with a woman or child who is being assaulted. They call looking for ways to support someone who has experienced domestic violence or abuse. They want to help that person and, for themselves, they want to know how they can cope with what they are hearing. Secondary trauma can be experienced while someone is helping a woman who has been assaulted. The Crisis Line workers sometimes refer these callers to the Kids Help Phone, or to a school guidance councillor. Other times, it is the school guidance councillor who contacts HWS Crisis Line looking for assistance. In this way, we work together with our community partners on a case by case situation.

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## AGM AND STAFF APPRECIATION DINNER

The Annual General Meeting and Staff Appreciation Dinner for Huron Women's Shelter was held in Goderich on Wednesday, June 1st, 2011. Presided over by Board Co-Presidents Carol McDonnell and Judy Stuart, the Board officially elected a new slate of officers for 2011-2012. Judy Stewart remains as President, with Gary Martin elected as Vice President. Sharon Creighton remains as Treasurer and Gwen Nicol-Macdonald remains as Secretary.



**HWS BOARD:** (L-R) Carol McDonnell, Pat Senn, Judy Stuart, Sharon Creighton, Heather Moffatt, Jessica Steenstra. Absent: Lynne Godkin, Rick Hilner, Janette McClean, Rev. Gwen Nicol-Macdonald, Gary Martin, Karen Stewart, Marilyn Vander Woude.

Huron Women's Shelter welcomes one new Board Member, Jessica Steenstra, to a three year term. HWS bids a fond farewell to retired Board Member and Past President, Carol McDonnell, after serving two full terms. Also in attendance was Jim Loft, Program Supervisor, Municipal First Nations Unit, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and Jerry McDonnell, Huron Perth United Way.



**Board President Judy Stuart presents a special recognition to Janet Sherratt for her 25 years of service to the organization.**



### HURON WOMEN'S SHELTER STAFF 2011

Following the AGM, the members of the Board saluted the work of the staff of Huron Women's Shelter. A Staff Appreciation Dinner for forty people was held at Sunset Golf Club in Goderich. All staff and a guest were invited to the dinner as a gesture of thanks from the Board of Directors. Staff were each given a plant to take home as a token of appreciation.

Huron Women's Shelter is blessed to have many long time staff and experiences a very low staff turnover rate – a tribute to the organization and its hard working, dedicated and compassionate staff.

If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact Michele Hansen at [michele@huronwomensshelter.com](mailto:michele@huronwomensshelter.com)

### INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

For an annual membership fee of only \$10, you can attend and vote in our Annual General Meeting, and will become a part of the larger voice of our organization within the community. Board meetings are held monthly at the Huron Women's Centre in Goderich. Everyone is invited to attend. New members are elected annually. For more information, visit our website at: [www.huronwomensshelter.com/membership.html](http://www.huronwomensshelter.com/membership.html)

### NEXT MEETING DATES:

Wednesday, July 13 at 7 p.m.  
Huron Women's Shelter, Goderich

# Please consider making a donation to Huron Women's Shelter

- Give to the Alice Munro Fund  
a benevolent fund which supports the dignity and self worth of women and children by covering the financial cost of things that may be challenging for women in crisis to afford (including dental care, participation in recreational activities, etc.)
- Give to the Roma Harris Fund  
which provides for shelter and care of pets while women are escaping violence.
- Help HWS purchase gift cards  
which are used throughout the year as birthday presents for the women and children in our shelter and second stage housing facilities.
- Allow HWS to direct your donation to any area of need  
including providing for food, clothing, or meeting the basic needs of the women and children in our shelter and second stage housing facilities.

## Help Us Reach Our Goal!

This year's goal is to raise  
**\$80,000**  
to help the organization keep the doors open to ensure that services continue to be available to the community.

Your support will make a real difference in the lives of women and children in need.



## I support Huron Women's Shelter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct my donation to \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation for  \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  other amount

My donation is paid by  Cash  Cheque  Money order \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank You For Your Support*

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



# Safe Harbour Run

BAYFIELD, ONTARIO CANADA

More than 400 participants braved the heat for the Third Annual Safe Harbour Run on Sunday, June 12th in Bayfield, bringing in an incredible one-day total of approximately \$8,500 for Huron Women's Shelter. The event featured a 5 km competition, a 2 km fun run/walk and a kiddie trot.



**And they're off! The start of the Kiddie Trot.**



**The first runner, Mike Chapman of London, crosses the finish line in the 5K run at a time of 16:40 minutes. In second place was Patrick Deane of Thorndale, with a time of 17:36 minutes, followed by Mike Park of Clinton in third placed, with a time of 17:52 minutes.**



**The Fit Body Bootcamp Group from Goderich was one of many groups who participated in this year's run.**



**MacKenzie Berard of Bayfield placed first in the 2K run with a time of 08:30 minutes.**



**Bridget Jeffray of Goderich was the first female to cross the finish line in the 5K run with a time of 20:43 minutes. In second place was Michele Studhalter of Blyth with a time of 21:39 minutes, followed by Deena Covey from Adrian, Michigan, with a time of 22:09 minutes.**

*Congratulations to all of our participants and a very special thanks to our sponsors and volunteers!*

## AN EVENING IN JUNE BENEFIT CONCERT

Residents of Huron County enjoyed a little night music in support of the Huron Women's Shelter with "An Evening in June" – a benefit concert and strawberry social on Monday, June 13th at Northside United Church in Seaforth.

HuronSong, a community choral group of approximately 35 singers from across Huron County, performed a 90-minute musical program featuring songs of love and living, under the direction of Deborah Lambert of Seaforth. The program also featured Guest Soloist, Dr. David Walker of Goderich.



**The HuronSong Singers under the direction of Deborah Lambert of Seaforth perform songs of love and living at "An Evening in June" benefit concert for HWS.**



**Guest Soloist, Dr. David Walker performs.**

All proceeds from the event, which totalled \$1869, were directed towards the work of HWS. Thank you to all who attended "An Evening in June", and a very special thanks to our performers for sharing their time and talents with us!

## "TAKE A SWING AGAINST VIOLENCE" GOLF TOURNAMENTS

An enthusiastic group of golfers took to the links this June for a day of fun, fitness, and friendly competition during the 12th annual "Take a Swing at Violence" Golf Tournaments.

The tournaments were held on June 15th at the Maitland Golf and Country Club in Goderich, and June 29th at the Wingham Golf and Curling Club, bringing in a grand total of approximately \$9,600 for the Huron Women's Shelter.

Congratulations to this year's winners! We hope to see you all again next year!



**The 2011 winning team proudly display their trophies at the Maitland Golf and Country Club in Goderich on June 15th: (L-R) Jan Filman, Michele Hansen, Roma Harris, and Eleanor Schnell.**



**The top team for 2011 at the Wingham Maitland Golf and Curling Club on June 29th: (L-R) Michele Hansen, Nadine Wathen, Dorthy Fitzpatrick, and Judy Campbell.**

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Through calls to the Crisis Line, women can do safety planning—if they want to come in or access police help, the Crisis Line workers can then try to work with them in real time, keeping them safer while they make a plan. They also walk women through what it will be like when they do arrive at the Shelter. “They might need to call from down the road at a payphone, at Tim Hortons, or wherever it happens to be—that happens a lot.

They sometimes call us before they call 911—especially if we have dealt with them before; they have comfort and trust with us and they may not have a positive trust with police. Some clients we have dealt with me for many years—that is a pretty intimate relationship—11 years— and it is confidential, and that information stays where it needs to stay and they get the help they need” says Taylor.

Through a long and positive relationship with the police, the HWS is often able to help police respond more effectively to a domestic assault. By being able to give police a quick briefing and exact details, women in crisis can receive help without having to re-tell their entire story to a 911 operator. “If I am calling for someone who needs help, I can give the back story and the police will respond. They know if they get a call from the Shelter they need to respond very quickly. We know exactly the questions they are going to ask ahead of time so we can glean that information from the person if we don’t have it from past calls.”

The staff on the phone lines have received trauma training, emergency training, CPR, first aid, vicarious trauma training to keep them at the top of their abilities to respond. They are also blessed with common sense, patience, calmness under pressure, as well as the ability to multi-task, to be emphatic, to prioritize in a crisis situation, and to be familiar with community partners and referrals. “We need to be that strong rock to say there is somebody out there for you and if it is not me I know who it is,” adds Taylor.

“The work is very rewarding and you feel like you are helping in a tangible way. You can see every day how you help them empower themselves and get back on their feet again—that’s a pretty cool thing.”

**IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF HELP,  
OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS,  
PLEASE CALL OUR 24 HOUR  
CRISIS LINE AT:**

**1-800-265-5506**

## NOW NEEDED FOR SUMMER

Donations are gratefully accepted year round, and can include basic needs, personal care items, non-perishable food items, and monetary donations.

Basic needs can include items such as:

- large bottles of shampoo and conditioner
- personal care items and toiletries
- clothing for women and children
- new underwear for women and children
- blankets, pillows, pajamas and slippers

During the summer months, our centres are also in need of:

- bathing suits for girls, boys and women (new/used accepted)
- running shoes / sandals / flip flops
- backyard toys / sand toys
- basketballs, footballs, and soccer balls
- towels (new/used)
- sunscreen
- bug spray
- swimmers (diapers for infants to wear in pools)
- diapers (size 5 & 6)
- women’s socks (adult)
- umbrellas

Your support is greatly appreciated, and makes a real difference in the lives of women and children in need.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP?

At the Huron Women’s Shelter we’re all about providing shelter, support, counselling and advocacy to women in need, and the best way for us to achieve our goals is through your continued support. Here are just a few of the ways you can help us make a difference in the lives of others:

- ✓ **BECOME A VOLUNTEER**
- ✓ **JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- ✓ **DONATE**
- ✓ **STAY INFORMED**

Subscribe to our newsletter, visit our new website, or contact our staff for more information.