



Huron Women's Shelter

Spring 2011



24 HOUR CRISIS LINE

1.800.265.5506

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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



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

March 8, 2011 International Women’s Day
Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

Late this winter, as we faced yet another forecast of more snow and closing highways, I was drawn, via the internet to the Middle East, where by contrast, in Kabul Afghanistan, it was seven degrees with light rain. The weather conditions are not the only thing that is different. There is news that the government of Hamid Karzai has recently introduced a bill that wrests control of women’s shelters in Afghanistan from the local Afghan women’s NGOs that have founded and run them, and transfers that control to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA).

If this bill becomes law:

Women and girls seeking shelter will be required to plead their case before an eight-member Government panel, including conservative members of the Supreme Court and Ministry of Justice. This panel will determine whether a woman needs to be in a shelter or should be sent to jail or returned to her home (and her abuser).

Women will have to undergo “forensic” exams (virginity tests) to determine whether they have had sex and therefore committed adultery; a test that is medically invalid.

The Afghan Women’s Network, an umbrella organization of women’s human rights groups, released a statement about this planned takeover of shelters. In part they say “how fragile have been our gains, how meaningless have been the laws we’ve fought to have passed, how useless have been the policies we struggled to see implemented in this land where there is no belief in women’s rights. Where a woman’s position in society is considered a mere extension of her role in her family and tribe, and where ethics and beliefs are exclusively understood through a masculine definition, for which women pay the price every day. We, the women

activists, are now accused by the government of having dishonoured the national pride of the country by publicly exposing the egregious and often humiliating violations of rights that women are exposed to. This, they said, shames us in the eyes of the world”? This shames us?”

Women’s shelters in Canada have had many historic struggles; community support for shelters was very low in the late eighties, historic underfunding and the constant need, even now, to fund raise a significant portion of operational budgets are but of few of our challenges. However by contrast, the work to end violence against women and support women’s equality in Canada is far easier than elsewhere in the world.

Afghanistan is a country where ten years ago there were no women’s shelters; today there 14 shelters attempting to provide services to women. Funding for these services comes from a mix of international organizations, private donors and Western governments. The proposed legislation will see the Afghan Government take over complete control of all women’s shelters. A truly frightening possibility!

As we at the Huron Women’s Shelter celebrated International Women’s Day on March 8th by distributing small chocolates to women across our community, we are reminded that the work to end violence against women is a global reality. We will work locally with our own community to be clear about the importance of achieving equality for women and we are reminded of the dire consequences when the rights of women are not acknowledged and protected.

*Sincerely,
Michele Hansen*

Please visit www.huronwomensshelter.com to explore our website. We also welcome your feedback, questions, and suggestions for future content.



(Some information in this article is cited from Sangar Rahimi, contributing report, The New York Times, February 20, 2011)

HWS WELCOMES NEW BOARD PRESIDENT: JUDY STUART

The Huron Women's Shelter welcomes a new President of the Board of Directors, Judy Stuart, to the position as of January 1, 2011. Judy takes over the position from Carol McDonnell. Carol and Judy shared the position, which is traditionally a three year term – each taking on the responsibility for one and half years.

Judy joined the Board of HWS five years ago, becoming active in assisting with personnel, property and fund raising. Now, as President, she sits on all committees. Judy says the timing is right for her to take on this larger role as she has more time since retiring as Head of Guidance at Goderich District Collegiate Institute in January 2010. She previously was a teacher in Clinton and has also lived and taught in Botswana with CUSO.

"There have been many of my students helped by the Shelter – sometimes for their families and sometimes for the young women, themselves. Circumstances have occurred which make young women have to leave their families, on their own. This is an organization which I've always admired, in a sense that I feel it is very professionally run, has a really good reputation and provides a great benefit to the community," says Stuart. "I really admire how confidential the organization is. It's such a safe place. Once I made a referral there I'd rest assured that the young woman was receiving excellent care."

Judy is focusing her leadership at HWS on helping the organization deal with the need for future expansion and develop private parking at sites, allowing people more privacy and security while staying at the Shelter. As well, with her background in personnel, she sees an importance for succession planning in leadership roles. She also encourages people to consider joining the HWS as a member and possibly as a Board member, too. As President, Judy wants each Board member to feel needed and encourages them to bring their individual skills to specific areas of need – be it fund development or property management.

"We actually are a fun group to be a part of and I've had a rewarding experience here as a volunteer. You get a good reaction from people when they hear of your



NEW BOARD PRESIDENT JUDY STUART AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHELE HANSEN.

involvement. I think it's because of the staff, who are so amazing and contribute so much to the community." Judy has been particularly impressed by the program, Salvaging Sisterhood, which helps build self-esteem among girls and young women. She has also seen the positive impact that the boys group have had with her students, helping them to adjust during times of family difficulty. As well, Judy supports the ways that the Shelter buildings can be used as community meeting places. "It's nice to see the Shelter there as an awareness building, too, so that community groups can partner with the HWS and possibly share speakers and resources."

If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact Michele Hansen at 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

NEXT MEETING DATES:

Wednesday, April 13 at 7 p.m.
Wednesday, May 11 at 7 p.m.
Huron Women's Shelter, Goderich

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MARCH 8, 2011

The Huron Women's Shelter marked International Women's Day on March 8, 2011 by distributing chocolates to local coffee shops, libraries, hospital emergency waiting rooms and medical clinics throughout Huron County. These treats were displayed on the front counter of each location to raise awareness and celebrate International Women's Day, and to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women.



NOW NEEDED

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



SOUP'S ON IN BAYFIELD

On Sunday, February 20, 2011, residents in Bayfield warmed up by sampling some delicious soups from several local restaurants and organizations, including Huron Women's Shelter, which offered "A Cuppa Classic Comfort, Corn Chowder". Organized by the Bayfield Town Hall, proceeds will support the Town Hall's ongoing renovations. The event provided HWS with a great opportunity to share information about our services with those in our community.

Fewer Canadians are reporting spousal abuse according to StatsCan

Though about 1.2 million Canadians have recently been victims of physical or sexual abuse by their spouse or partner, police are hearing about it less and less according to new figures from Statistics Canada.

In 2009, 22% of spousal abuse victims said the violence had been reported to police – down from 28% in 2004. About two-thirds of the victims said a violent act had occurred multiple times before they contacted the authorities.

Women were far more likely to report spousal violence than men, at 23%, compared to only 7% of male victims.

If you are a being abused, please call our 24 HOURS CRISIS LINE at 1.800.265.5506 or visit our website at www.huronwomensshelter.com

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.

Thank You!

Huron Women's Shelter received a remarkable \$18,615 in cash donations over the Holiday season, and are very grateful for this ongoing support of the organization's many needs.

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?

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE MONTREAL, QC DECEMBER 6, 1989

On December 6, 1989, Marc Lepine walked into a classroom at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, Quebec. He separated the men from the women and opened fire on the women. The murderer was clear about why, he believed these young women in engineering school had stolen his rightful place. Because women had been accepted to engineering school there was no place for him.



Margo Morris, Past President, joined by Mary Greg speaks out about violence against women.

DONATION FROM EAST STREET STATION KNITTING CLUB

A big "Thank You" to our friends at the East Street Station Knitting Club, who helped to spread a little warmth over the holiday season. HWS Board President Carol McDonnell accepted a donation of handknit blankets for our Shelter and Second Stage Housing facilities from club members Bonnie Walter and Mary Anne Rea.



Friends and community partners gather to show their support.



Each rose represented one of the women who were killed in the massacre.



Carol McDonnell accepts a donation for the Goderich Shelter from Bonnie Walter and Mary Anne Rea.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The 16th annual Breakfast with Santa event and fund raiser last December was a great success once again! Thank you to everyone who attended and enjoyed a wonderful meal, activities and, of course, a visit with the guest of honour!

The Christmas season saw many others come forward with multiple generous gifts to our organization including donations in cash of \$18,615 as well as many wonderful gifts of clothing, food, necessities, toys and gifts. It certainly made the season a lot warmer and brighter for many families in crisis.



Santa's helper and HWS Volunteer Lynne Harris helps in the kitchen.

We are pleased to report that, thanks to the generosity of our donors, volunteers and guests, the 2010 Breakfast with Santa raised a total of \$1,294 this year!



HWS OPEN HOUSE FOR POLITICIANS

On Wednesday, January 19, 2011, the Huron Women's Shelter offered local politicians a closer look inside the important work being done within four of its facilities, including the Shelter and the Second Stage Housing facility in Goderich, as well as the Second Stage Housing sites in both Clinton and Exeter.

Politicians had an opportunity to see the services that HWS makes available for the women and children of Huron County. They also met with members of the Board of Directors as well as some of the staff members working at each location.



Executive Director Michele Hansen (centre) provides a tour of the Huron Women's Shelter in Goderich to local politicians, including (L-R) John Grace, Councillor, Town of Goderich; Judy Stuart, President, HWS Board of Directors; David Yeats, Councillor, Town of Goderich; and Deb Shewfelt, Mayor, Town of Goderich.

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 12TH ANNUAL “TAKE A SWING AGAINST VIOLENCE” GOLF TOURNAMENTS

Join us for a Nine Hole Women’s Tournament and a day of fun, fitness, and friendly competition on Wednesday, June 15 at the Maitland Golf & Country Club in Goderich and/or Wednesday, June 29 at the Wingham Golf and Curling Club. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. with Tee Off at 9:30 a.m. It is a “stepaway” best ball format.

Teams must pre-register. This event sells out quickly. For more information, and to register for these exciting events, please visit our website and follow the links to the registration form or contact us at 519-524-5333. All proceeds support Huron Women’s Shelter.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 1, 2011
376 Huron Road
Goderich, ON

Please join us on Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. for our Annual General Meeting. We are located at 376 Huron Road in Goderich.

FESTIVAL OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

July 8, 9 & 10, 2011
Courthouse Park on the Square
Goderich, ON

Share your talents and creativity, and purchase a table for the annual Goderich Festival of Arts and Crafts. Register early to secure your spot. Spaces are \$220 each. For full details, please contact the Huron Women’s Shelter, or visit our website.

SAFE HARBOUR RUN

Save the Date! The Safe Harbour Run will be held once again in Bayfield on Sunday, June 12. This event is open to everyone from serious competitors to recreational runners. Even the kids are welcome to participate in the “kiddie trot” around the Square in Bayfield (ages 2-6).

June 12, 2011
Bayfield Square
5K Run and 2K Fun Run/Walk

The event will be held throughout the village and is a certified course which features a 5 kilometre competition, a 2 kilometre fun run/walk and the kiddie trot. There are door prizes and t-shirts available for those who register (\$25 fee or free registration with \$50 in sponsorship).

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. and the races begin at 9:30 a.m., starting and finishing in the Square.

If you would like to help as a volunteer, or want more details about this fun new event, please contact the Huron Women’s Shelter. To register, please visit our website and follow the links.