



Huron Women's Shelter

Holiday 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**

It is with a heavy heart that I write the message for this edition of our newsletter. My sadness is the result of being situated in a community that was ravaged by an F-3 Tornado on August 21, 2011. The consequences of this major weather event are far reaching. We know that the members of this community have all had our psyches permanently altered. Whether or not individuals had their property directly affected by the winds, we all have lost a sense of safety and we have lost much that helped define Goderich as "The Prettiest Town in Canada".

The emergency shelter and our Goderich second stage buildings were unscathed by the tornado. However, the physical needs of individuals, the economic strain, and the emotional toll have and will continue to have profound effects. The emergency shelter has been experiencing a larger than normal service demand. In the first six months of this fiscal year; April to September, the average occupancy rate has ranged from a low of 122% to a high of 176%. The monthly occupancy rate has not fallen below 100 per cent. We know that this trend is likely to continue. Providing safe shelter for women and children and affordable housing at our second stage apartment buildings is our central role always. While the community of Goderich recovers from the tornado our services are even more critical.

While we are working hard on the provision of direct services, we have also been working hard on community awareness. In October, we sponsored the production of *The Clock Maker* by Stephen Massicotte. In this issue you will see photos of our Gala held at Blyth Festival Theatre on October 14th. We packed the house and held a very successful silent auction. We want to thank all of you who supported our auction by either donating items or purchasing items. The play, *The Clock Maker*, was brilliantly directed by Eric Coates. I want to personally thank Eric; working with him on this project was a privilege.

The actors; Lisa Hood, Jordan Henry, Steve Howard, Quinn Ross, and Bob Marshall were all wonderful. They all need to be thanked for their voluntary hard work and dedication to the project. Special thanks also to The Goderich Little Theatre for partnering to make this event a community success. I also want to sincerely thank Karen Stewart, Board Member who assisted greatly in making *The Clock Maker* a huge success.

December will be a very busy month; Breakfast with Santa, the December 6th Vigil, and a choral sing in Seaforth called Huron Carols – more information on these events can be found with this newsletter. We are also planning an event for International Women’s Day, March 8th, 2012 – more about that in the next newsletter.

In closing I want to thank all of you who support the shelter and its services. As we approach this festive time of year, we want you know that your generosity is appreciated always.

*Sincerely,
Michele Hansen*

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

OUR SERVICES:

Since 1985, our shelter has provided safe, temporary housing for victims of woman abuse and their children. Second Stage Housing has been operating since 1991 and provides rent geared to income apartments in secure buildings where women and children can live for one year.

Residents are offered individual and group counselling, as well as information on housing, legal aid, financial assistance, and job training.

Residents benefit from a feminist analysis of woman abuse, an empowerment model in supportive counselling and the understanding and support of the staff and other residents.

OUR PHILOSOPHY:

We believe that women, given emotional support, and much needed resources, can be empowered to recognize their own strengths and choose a safe and fulfilling future.

STAFF PROFILE: AMY WHYTE, SHELTER SUPPORT WORKER

Amy Whyte is officially known as the Shelter Support Worker but she more accurately describes herself as House Mom!

"I can spend \$400 in under 40 minutes at the grocery store," she laughs about her twice weekly dashes for bargains at the Goderich grocery stores. Buying the food and household supplies for the women and children residents who stay in emergency shelter rooms is just one of her jobs. "Whatever needs to be done pretty much describes the rest," she says.

Even though, at 29, Amy doesn't have kids of her own, she has all the skills of a seasoned parent when it comes to caring for the families who stay in the 7 bedroom Shelter in Goderich. She oversees the kitchen, dining room, toy room, laundry room, and outside play yard, while also providing child care, handling repairs, and managing the donations that come in to keep the Shelter humming. And, she steps in as a front line relief worker when other staff are on breaks.

"... I like this job because I get to be out and about - it is flexible and there is never a dull moment."

It may sound hectic but Amy loves her job – one that she has been doing since 2005. Originally from Huron County, Amy earned a Social Service Worker diploma from Niagara College before returning to work at HWS in 2003 as a crisis support worker on a casual basis. She came to the shelter after attending a presentation by Executive Director Michele Hansen on volunteer programs. "I got the feminism bug and I like this job because I get to be out and about – it is flexible and there is never a dull moment."

On any given day the Shelter is usually full to capacity with about 8 women and their children. Some stay in a family suite while others have single bedrooms and share bathrooms. Amy understands that they are going through stressful times while trying to live in a new, communal setting. She helps them figure things out at weekly house meetings where women make meal plans and set cooking schedules. She encourages them



SHELTER SUPPORT WORKER, AMY WHYTE

to cook nutritious meals made from scratch – without needing expensive pre-packaged goods. At times, she cares for their children when the moms need to attend court or counselling. She can often be seen taking kids for wagon rides, to the YMCA or to the splash pad. An energetic and positive person, Amy is well liked by the residents.

Many generous people and organizations bring donations of food, clothing and supplies to the shelter. They can be dropped off inside the front door. Amy sorts and organizes the donations – and ensures that everything from sandwiches, pizzas, and food get quickly distributed in the kitchen to families. She also keeps work clothes on hand for the women to wear for job interviews and court appearances. In particular, she appreciates donation of fresh vegetables and fruits, socks, underwear, pillows, towels, and sanitary products.

Amy also appreciates the generosity of Goderich stores which often set aside expired products like shampoo or alert her to special deals. "They all know me – I do a lot of errands!" On a serious note, she observes how tough it is to live on a small or no income, and she is proud of the way the Shelter is able to help women who live on their own by providing community food baskets when able.

If you wish to help please check our Now Needed section in this newsletter, or on our website at www.huronwomensshelter.com.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) funds more than 200 Violence Against Women (VAW) agencies across Ontario that provide emergency shelter, counselling and/or transitional housing support services for women and their children. In 2010, MCSS launched an online client satisfaction survey to assess client perceptions of VAW services. The survey is voluntary and some women chose not to participate.

This summary of the highlights from the VAW survey reflects data from surveys that were completed by clients of VAW agencies across the province between June 1, 2010 and March 31, 2011. In total, 2,785 women participated in the survey during this timeframe.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The majority of survey respondents reported being Caucasian and English-speaking. Most of the women (77%) were between 21-50 years of age.

REFERRALS TO SERVICES

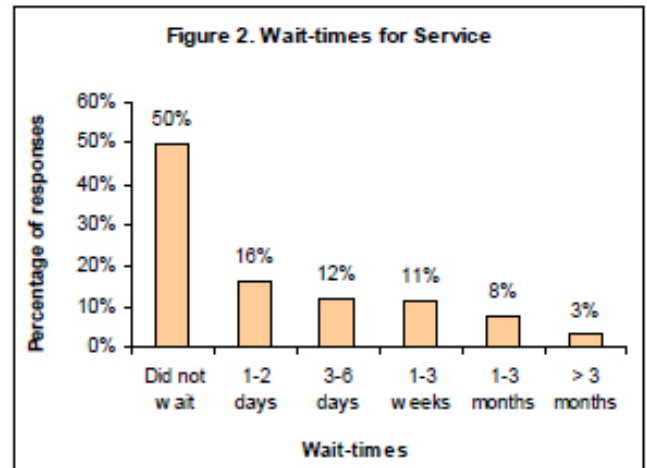
Word-of-mouth was reported as the dominant method for referring individuals to VAW services: 30% of respondents expressed that they learned about their agency from a family member or a friend and 21% were referred by a social worker or counsellor. The remaining 49% of respondents indicated hospitals, police or crisis helplines as their source of referral.

WAIT-TIMES AND DURATION OF SERVICES

Approximately half of the respondents indicated that they did not have to wait for the specific services for which they completed the survey (Figure 2). An additional 29% received help within a week of contacting the agency. Across the regions, however, roughly one in ten women (between 6%-13%) had to wait one month or more for services.

TYPES OF SERVICES AND BARRIERS

In terms of the types of services received, 89% of respondents indicated that they received help planning for their safety, 72% received help finding necessary community services, and 50% received help finding an alternative residence. 36% of the clients reported that they had children who were also receiving help from the agency. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (64%) reported experiencing no barriers to receiving services. However, approximately one in three respondents (36%) reported difficulties accessing services.



Some of the service barriers reported by clients were:

- the agency was too far from clients' homes (20%);
- it was difficult to obtain childcare services (7%); and
- it was difficult to obtain pet-care services (5%).

SHELTER SERVICES

Of all respondents, 31% indicated that they were residing in a shelter. Most of these women (78%) reported they did not have to wait for a shelter vacancy. The majority of survey respondents felt that the shelter was a safe place to stay.

CLIENT OUTCOMES

In terms of what women have gained from agency services, respondents consistently reported high levels of positive outcomes. The survey respondents indicated that since receiving help from the agency:

- 88% felt safer;
- 91% felt that they could improve their quality of life;
- 89% felt that they were better goal-setters;
- 90% felt that they were better decision-makers;
- 89% felt more confident; and
- 96% would request assistance from the agency again in the future.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

Board meetings are held monthly at the Huron Women's Centre in Goderich. Anyone is invited to attend. New members are elected annually.

Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at 7 p.m.
Wednesday, February 8, 2012 at 7 p.m.

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?

Festival of Arts & Crafts

Our annual three-day Festival of Arts and Crafts, which took place between July 8th and 10th, 2011, was a great success this year, bringing in an incredible total of \$25,193 for the Huron Women's Shelter.

Thousands of people came out to Courthouse Park on the Square in Goderich over the three days to take in all of the local tastes, talent, and entertainment. A very special thanks to all of those who supported the Huron Women's Shelter again this year.



Festival organizers Andrea Brown and Rhonda Scholtz proudly welcome patrons to the annual Festival of Arts and Crafts. These dedicated individuals have once again shared their time and talents with us, and have helped to make this year's event another great success for our organization!



Tammy Heyman (Left) of Ladybird Ceramics, Richmond Hill, displays her wide selection of hand-painted ceramics.



A festival-goer enjoys a stroll through Courthouse Park.



Nancy Sword of from Stratford at her booth, Nancies Fancies. Her Harry Potter wands were a big hit with festival-goers.

Thank you to all of our vendors, volunteers, and patrons, for making this year's festival a success!

SHOPPERS DRUG MART® TREE OF LIFE™ CAMPAIGN

Between September 17th and October 14th 2011, Huron Women's Shelter and Shoppers Drug Mart® partnered for the tenth annual Tree of Life™ campaign, raking in a total of \$717 to support Huron Women's Shelter's service and programming initiatives.



TREE OF LIFE™ CAMPAIGN: (L-R) Theresa Thomas, Manager of Shoppers Drug Mart®; Michele Hansen, Executive Director of Huron Women's Shelter; and Tanya Mabon, Leaf Captain and Cash Manager at Shoppers Drug Mart®.

"Once again, we extend our sincere thanks to Shoppers Drug Mart®, their employees, and their customers, for their tremendous support throughout the 2011 Tree of Life™ Campaign," said Michele Hansen, Executive Director of Huron Women's Shelter. "We rely on the generosity and commitment of our community every year, and they continue to show their support for our organization and for our goal of improving the health and well-being of women."

The Shoppers Drug Mart® Tree of Life™ campaign is a four-week program held across Canada each autumn. In support of leading women's health organizations at the national, regional and local levels, customers, staff and Pharmacist-Owners at over 1,180 Shoppers Drug Mart® / Pharmaprix® stores together raise funds through the purchase of the Tree of Life™ paper icons, which include leaves, butterflies, and cardinals.

A very special thanks the staff at Goderich Shoppers Drug Mart® for their continued support.



THE CLOCK MAKER

Residents of Huron County recently enjoyed an evening of theatre in support of the Huron Women's Shelter with the production of *The Clock Maker* by Stephen Massicotte, directed by Eric Coates.

HWS hosted their Gala event at the Blyth Festival Theatre on October 14th, 2011. Talented actors performed for a packed house, bringing in a grand total of \$11,126 for HWS, which included ticket sales, as well as silent auction and raffle proceeds. A very special thanks to all who supported this special event.



THE CLOCK MAKER: Theatre-goers peruse the variety of items up for bid in the Silent Auction.



THE CLOCK MAKER: (L-R) Eric Coates, Director of *The Clock Maker*, and Michele Hansen, Executive Director of Huron Women's Shelter.

NOW NEEDED FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

It's not too early to start shopping for Christmas! Do the people on your Christmas list already have everything, or do you have someone on your list who's hard to buy for? Consider making a donation to HWS in their name this year.

There are also some basic needs on the HWS wish list this Christmas. The Centres in Goderich, Clinton, and Exeter are hoping that some simple gifts from the community will help women and their children have a better holiday and new year. Topping the list are basic needs such as large bottles of shampoo and conditioner; new underwear for women, children and teens; towels, blankets and comforters; pajamas and slippers, diapers (sizes 5 & 6) and baby wipes, toiletries for teens, movie passes, and stuffed animals.

The Centres will also gratefully accept donations of more traditional gifts which women and children (girls and boys up to age 16) may want to find under the tree. The gifts are also used throughout the year as birthday presents. For those wishing to make a more sizeable donation, there is also a need for winter coats and boots for women and children.

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



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE MONTREAL, QC

Tuesday, December 6, 2011
7:00 p.m.
Courthouse Park, Goderich



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Saturday, December 3, 2011
8:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Knox Presbyterian Church, Goderich

Join us on Saturday, December 3rd, 2011 for the 17th annual Breakfast with Santa in support of the Huron Women's Shelter. Young and old alike (and those in-between!) will enjoy a wonderful morning of delicious food, entertainment, crafts and, of course, a visit with Old St. Nick.

Established by the friends and family of the late Sue Munnoch, a Board member of our organization and a vibrant member of the Huron County community, Breakfast with Santa is held annually to raise funds and spread positive goodwill.

"HURON CAROLS"

An Afternoon of Christmas Music and Desserts
Benefit Concert for Huron Women's Shelter

Sunday, December 18, 2011
2:00 p.m.
Northside United Church, Seaforth

Featuring HuronSong Choral Ensemble

Tickets \$20
Available at Pete's Paper Clip, Seaforth
Huron Women's Shelter - 519 524 5333
and from HuronSong members

All proceeds go to Huron Women's Shelter
Free Babysitting Provided