



Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey Newsletter, Spring 2007

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Bruce County: 519-396-9655
Owen Sound: 1-877-379-6636
Sexual Assault: 1-866-578-5566

Our Growing House

If you live in the Kincardine area, you may have seen that we have some construction going on at our house. Our new addition will give us seven more offices and a meeting room plus a useable basement and washrooms. Since some staff are currently housed in the basement and in second floor spaces, we really needed this addition.

We have been planning this addition for months now. Initial talks and plans with our Property & Finance Committee started in 2005. We applied for funding and received approval from our primary funder, the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Their support came from the recognition of the expansion of programs at Women's House, such as the Sexual Assault Services, and the fact that we have been operating in cramped quarters for some time now. We have now expanded from ten beds to thirteen beds for women and children.

We were fortunate that the weather, for a great deal of the time, was mild enough to build during the winter. Mild spells allowed the cement basement floor to be poured and the roof installed before rainy weather.

We now have the shell of the building up and completely enclosed. The framing is up for the inside walls allowing electricians, plumbers,

security and phone installers to put in their materials and equipment. Throughout the building process, we have had lots of mud, machine activity, juggled parking and intermittent water and hydro outages. These disruptions have been minor considering what our end result will be!

Women's House would like to say thank you to all of the Property & Finance Committee members who have

been involved in this building project. It has taken many hours beyond their normal commitment to make this project the success it has been so far.

Our contractor, Allen & Hastings Limited, has been keeping us informed about the progress and we hope to move in by early summer. They have worked diligently on all aspects of the addition and we wish them continued success.



WHSBG in Owen Sound has a 'New Home'

We are thrilled to announce the purchase of a 4,000 sq. ft. heritage building at 229 10th Street E. in Owen Sound as the 'new home' for our Community Outreach Services, Child and Youth Witness Program and Sexual Assault Services. Thanks to a one-time capital grant from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, we have invested in a sustainable physical resource with a heritage designation, which will benefit the organization in so many ways. Currently the Staff Team of seven in Owen Sound is eagerly anticipating the projected moving date of May 30th. Our 'New Home' is more accessible, community-based and considerably larger with two group rooms, private counselling space, a reception area, resource

library and offices for the staff. The official Open House ceremony is planned for September when all of our members, supporters and community partners will be invited.



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Manager's Report

The Management Team welcomes newcomers in the Shelter Program, Theresa Winchester and Community Development Program, Patty Verdone as well as a new position, Human Resource & Admin Coordinator, Carol Burns. These enthusiastic women join current Executive Director, Casey Weichert and Sexual Assault Services Manager, Charlene Foster in managing programs provided by Women's House Serving Bruce & Grey. As varied as these individuals are, so are their backgrounds.

Theresa Winchester grew up in the Chepstow area and joined the Canadian Forces in 1973 as a human resources clerk. Graduating with an Honours History degree from the Royal Military College in 1986, Theresa worked as a manager at middle and senior levels in support of military and civilian employees. She honed her skills in labour relations, performance measurement, honours and awards, minority rights, financial management, policy writing, recruiting and community relations. She soon reached the rank of Major. Known for her strong feminist views and volunteer work with organizations dedicated to military families and strengthening women in Canada and developing nations, Theresa was awarded the Order of Military Merit and the Chaplain General's Commendation. In 2002, she retired to Point Clark with her husband, Joe and his buddy, Bandit. Their children and grandchildren reside in Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston. Lucky for Women's House, Theresa decided she was not quite ready for retirement and began working again as Shelter Manager in January, 2007.

Originally from Sault St. Marie, Patty Verdone spent 17 years in Victoria, B.C. developing integrated

Community Outreach Programs for those people most vulnerable. She has been the Executive Director of such programs ranging from women's supported housing & family self-sufficiency, mental health/addictions to the hardest to house. Prior to this Patty worked as a child & family counsellor, crisis counsellor and coordinator of specialized assessments. Her educational background is in social work and clinical psychology, with extensive post-degree professional development in human and resource management. Patty has long been committed to "growing" organizations through a community development approach to build strong partnerships and expand limited resources in order to promote a shared responsibility to create a better future. She brings her enthusiasm to the WHSBG Team and literally has come full circle.

Carol Burns brings to Women's House the breadth of experience and training one would expect

given her age. It is her life experiences, through which her professional experiences and education are filtered, that enable her to have a special understanding of the challenges faced by the women WHSBG serves. As a single parent of six children, Carol struggled to meet the demands and restrictions of welfare while raising her children and attending university full-time. As a meagrely-paid graduate student in the US, Carol faced decisions that taught her lessons no formal training could begin to address. Carol has vast experience working in shelters and sexual assault centres as well as providing legal advocacy and victim services. She has academic training in social service program development and evaluation as well as mediation training. This combination allows Carol to bring a unique perspective to the role of WHSBG's Coordinator of Human Resources and General Administration.



Patty Verdone, Carol Burns and Theresa Winchester

Sexual Assault Services – May Is Sexual Assault Awareness Month!

Plans are underway for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Join us for “Breakfast at the Market” in Owen Sound on Saturday, May 5th. Displays, food and information will be available. You can meet the staff and ask questions.

Look for info about sexual violence in various locations throughout Bruce and Grey Counties.

Keep listening to your local radio stations – we’ll be there!

Help End Sexual Violence What You Can Do

- Learn about sexual violence, why it happens and talk to others about it.
- See something? Say something! Whether it’s inappropriate reporting in the media that reinforces myths and lies about sexual assault - or a joke about rape told by a friend – speak up!
- Talk with women about how the risk of rape affects their daily lives.
- Be aware of language. When a woman is called a *bitch, freak, whore, baby* or *dog*, it sends a message that women are less than fully human. When women are seen as inferior, it becomes easier to treat them with less respect, disregard their rights and ignore their well-being.
- Invite a speaker from *Sexual Assault Services* to your group or meeting.
- Speak up when you see or hear behaviour that degrades women and promotes sexual violence.
- Take part in events that support women.
- Volunteer at Women’s House, *Sexual Assault Services*.
- Send a donation.

Sexual Assault Services Crisis & Support Line:

1-866-578-5566

Volunteer Program: 519-372-1113 X 225

Volunteers are needed in the Sexual Assault Services program in *both Bruce and Grey Counties* as drivers, and to assist with public education, reception, library resources, and accompaniment.

Sexual Assault Services (S.A.S.) Staff:

| | |
|----------|---|
| Brenda | SAS Counsellor (Bruce County) |
| Candace | SAS Volunteer & Community Development Coordinator |
| Bev | SAS Office Coordinator |
| Jessica | SAS Counsellor (Grey County) |
| Charlene | SAS Manager |

Second Stage Housing Project – Rebuilding Hope

Exciting days are ahead of us as we recently received news that our funding proposal for the Affordable Housing Grant has been approved. The proposal requested \$1,050,000.00 towards the cost of building 15 second stage housing units in the 4 communities of Wiarton, Walkerton, Port Elgin and Kincardine. The request for the maximum amount of \$70,000.00 per unit was instead approved at \$60,000.00 per unit for only 11 of the 15 units requested. We had not been successful in obtaining a piece of land suitable for the Walkerton site and thus it was not funded at all. In total we will receive \$660,000.00 of the \$1,595,000.00 required to build 4 units in Port Elgin, 3 units in Wiarton and another 4 in Kincardine.

Each building will house one 1-bedroom, two 2-bedroom (only one 2-bedroom in Wiarton) and one 3-bedroom independent apartments, plus a common room to be used for on site counselling and groups for both women and children.

International Women’s Day

This year, International Women’s Day was celebrated on March 8th by the Women’s House *Serving Bruce and Grey*. We truly returned to our roots this year by celebrating on the actual day commemorated by the United Nations and enjoyed dinner and an excellent speaker in Port Elgin.

Our speaker this year was Erika Ritter, CBC radio host, broadcaster, columnist, author and overall entertainer. Ritter told us stories from her latest book, **The Great Big Book of Guys: Alphabetical Encounters With Men** and then offered the audience an opportunity to ask her

Donated land and some generous fundraising have provided us with enough funds to begin building a site in Port Elgin this spring. However, we are still a long way off of seeing our dream become reality in all 4 of the communities that so desperately need this type of secured and affordable housing for abused women and their children. Since the Walkerton site has not received any of the grant funds, we must fundraise the entire \$580,000.00 for the build.

Since fundraising will be such an important aspect to the success of this project, we think it necessary to develop individual fundraising committees in each of the 4 communities. If you or someone you know would be interested in supporting this very worthwhile and exciting project by joining a committee, pledging a financial contribution or hosting a fundraising event, please contact Casey Weichert at 519-396-9814 # 32 or send an email to casey@whsbg.on.ca.

questions about her career or to share their own stories.

The Woman of Distinction Award this year became the “Women of Distinction” Award with the IWD Committee honouring *The Canadian Federation of University Women Calendar Girls, Women’s Reach, Women in Nuclear (WiN) Bruce Chapter Executive* and the *Chantry Island Chambettes*.

A special thanks to our sponsors –we could not do this without them and thanks to our Fundraising staff, Donna and Patty and the IWD Committee for a wonderful evening celebrating women!

Calendar of Events

- **Sexual Assault Services Volunteer Training**
The sexual assault training is 16 hours long and involves three evenings and one full Saturday:
Tuesday, May 8th – Saturday, May 12th – Tuesday, May 15th – Thursday, May 17th
- **May 10 – Radiothon** at the Coast 95.5 in Kincardine. This is a 12 hour fundraising and public awareness marathon about Women’s House and the services we offer. Please tune in and call in your donations to the radio station. Phone numbers will be announced on the radio.
- **June 20 – Annual General Meeting** at Bruce Power Visitor’s Centre Located on Conc. 4 Old Bruce Twp., below the wind mills.
- **June 20 – Donor Appreciation** will take place in conjunction with our Annual General Meeting. We honour all our donors who have donated \$1000 or more in our last fiscal year with plaques.
- **October 20 – Women’s House Fundraising Dance**
- **December 6 – Montreal Massacre Vigil** – CAW Education Centre
- **Moving Day at shelter** – end of May or beginning of June – we occupy our new offices!
- **Moving Day in Owen Sound** – May 31st!

Our Volunteer Program – With Thanks to all of our Volunteers

Women’s House *Serving Bruce & Grey* encourages volunteer involvement within our organization. We encourage diversity, inclusiveness and equity for our workers, our clients and our volunteers. We recognize that the abuse of women and children are a community issue. Volunteers enable the Women’s House to deliver services that we would otherwise be unable to deliver.

In trying to stretch our time to meet as many needs as possible we depend on volunteers in many roles. We have volunteers that drive clients to a variety of appointments. They donate their time while receiving a small stipend for mileage. Some volunteers

help staff with administration such as photocopying, admail, gardening, sorting donations, household routines, maintenance, peer support, childcare, board of directors and a number of other tasks. Overall, the involvement of volunteers contributes to a greater quality of service to women and children.

Presently we have approximately 40-60 volunteers who help us.

In the past year we have recruited and trained new volunteers. We try to provide the most current training by revising our training program. We work hard at retaining volunteers and hope that in the coming year we will be able to add others to our list. The

on-going challenge has been to build up a volunteer base in Grey County. Our newer Community Counselling program and our Sexual Assault programs need more volunteers presently. If you are interested please call 519-396-9814 ext. 39 for Bruce County. In Grey County call 519-372-1113 ext 225.

Women’s House *Serving Bruce & Grey* gratefully acknowledge the enormous contribution of our volunteers this past year. Our Volunteer Appreciation in April is only a small token of thanks for the great contribution these caring people make to enhance our service.



Please help us



Thank You

This year’s Women’s House fundraising goal is \$155,000

Yes! I would like to help Women’s House as they continue their vital and at times life-saving work with women and children.

I am enclosing my cheque for: \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 Other, \$ _____

I prefer to use my VISA Mastercard I would like a charitable receipt

Card number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature for credit card: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email Address: _____ Yes, please email me news about upcoming events