

## Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter

# Newsletter

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## “Put Yourself First” - Kara's Story

“I am happier now, a lot calmer, and above all, confident that everything is going to be okay.”

I met my partner when I was nineteen years old. We were on the same sports team and it was love at first sight. We embarked on a relationship full of adventure and wonder as we travelled abroad and spent months and sometimes even years in different countries.

Everything was great; we were the ideal couple. For a while, I truly believed it.

Three years into the relationship was when the verbal abuse started. I was told “you’re stupid” or “you’re ugly.” I would stand up for myself and resist, but I stayed with him because I didn’t think it was that bad. I didn’t want people to know and thought this was something we could deal with ourselves.

He told me I was his world, his everything. We moved away from our families and all we had was each other – for better or for worse (*continued on Page 7*).



**1 in 2** Canadian women will experience at least one incident of physical or sexualized violence in their lifetime

# Highlighting Myths and the Passing of Bill 204

Message from our Executive Director: Kim Ruse



This summer has been one of steady demand for the services of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. It has also been a time for partnerships and changes in our work. We continue to work with our partner agencies and other service providers to coordinate services and maximize the reach to meet higher demands and higher number of people in need of our services.

In addition to high demand for services, victims of domestic violence also face other barriers. Bill 204, Safer Spaces for Victims of Domestic Violence came into effect in our province to reduce some of these barriers. This bill allows victims of domestic abuse to break their lease early if they need to flee to find safer housing. This is a ground breaking move and is a step forward in removing financial barriers for those needing to flee

dangerous situations. The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter joined the YWCA, Minister McLean, MLA Drever and MLA Fitzpatrick to launch the new bill in August.

Through the process of implementing the bill and the media attention that followed, two common, yet still surprising myths about domestic violence were highlighted. There were many questions about the bill and its impact. The most common question I was asked as this bill was launched was..... why do we need this bill any way? Why would anyone have to prove they are a victim of domestic violence? The second question I was asked was "Why would financial barriers stop people from leaving?"

Unfortunately, we often have an idea or an image of what a "victim" looks like. It is a powerful myth that we think we know what a victim or a

perpetrator looks like, as if there is a typical stereotype we could identify. The truth is that victims are unique. They come from all walks of life and you would often be surprised to learn who has been a victim of family violence.

The other myth highlighted through the launching of Bill 204 is the belief that finances don't stop people from leaving. Some people wondered why we would even need this type of bill. Financial barriers to leaving are very common and often leave victims in despair and with little hope that they can rebuild and move on with a new life.

Hopefully, this new bill combined with improved partnerships between service providers will help reduce the financial barriers to victims seeking help.

## Our Administration Office Has Moved

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter's new Administration Office address is:  
**500 - 1509 Centre Street SW.**

The 24-Hour Family Violence Helpline **(403) 234-SAFE (7233)** remains the same.





# Misconceptions Around Family Violence

**Why doesn't she just leave?** Women who leave their abusers are at 75% greater risk of being killed than those who stay, amongst countless other factors.

The myths and misconceptions surrounding the serious issue of family violence and abuse are impeding progress. The first step to taking a stand against family violence and abuse is learning the facts and complexities around the issue. By dispelling myths and misconceptions such as “Why doesn't she just leave?” we can start helpful conversations and better understand and help victims.

Not only is family violence and abuse increasingly common in Canada (1 in 2 Canadian women will experience at least one incident of physical or sexualized violence) it can also happen to anyone. Although it is tough to face, realizing the impact of this issue is key to resolving it. The Calgary Police Service responds to approximately 19,000 domestic conflict calls a year. Last year our helpline received 11,368 calls - that's more than 30 calls a day.

When women are admitted to the Emergency Shelter the top three forms of abuse reported are: emotional/verbal abuse, physical abuse, and financial abuse. Victims come from all walks of life, all cultures, all educational backgrounds, all income levels, and all faiths.

Many believe that violence and abuse don't affect children and youth; however, children are impacted by abuse in a variety of ways. Sometimes the impact is caused by the stress of abuse, and others the impact is the child coping. Our Child and Adolescent Services offer individual and family counselling in the Shelter as well as in the community. The issue is vast, and it is troubling, but there is hope. “I like that my mommy smiles now, when she smiles my heart smiles.” This quote came from a young child staying at the Emergency Shelter.

There is the rehabilitation side of the issue when women access our programs and services, and there is also prevention. Both are immensely important when it comes to family violence and abuse.

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is “More than a Shelter” and combats the issue through a multitude of programs focused on prevention, rehabilitation, safety, and healing. Our prevention programs include our Healthy Relationships Program, and our Men's Counselling Service. Our rehabilitation programs are the Emergency Shelter, Community Counselling, Court Support, and more. For a list of our programs and services please visit [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com).

**Learn more about the myths and misconceptions surrounding family violence and abuse in our 2015-2016 Report to the Community on our website [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com)**



## FirstEnergy Capital

### A True Philanthropic Hero

FirstEnergy Capital has been a leader in philanthropy in Calgary since it started in 1993. In fact, investing in Calgary's social and economic development is one of its founding goals. We all continue to benefit from FirstEnergy Capital's capacity to understand the scope and diversity of the charitable sector. Since they started doing business they have shared \$38 million with 620 charities.

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is honoured to have had FirstEnergy Capital's support for 22 years. With donations coming to us twice yearly, during Stampede and Christmas, FirstEnergy Capital has sustained our programs over the long-term – a gift to the over 180,000 Calgarians who have used our services. Families can continue to depend on us to be here if they experience family violence and abuse.

Considering 2016's prolonged economic slump, FirstEnergy Capital's pledge to share \$100,000 amongst four local charities during Stampede is remarkable. We were honoured by FirstEnergy Capital's selfless generosity. Despite streamlining their operations, their compassion to help families at the Emergency Shelter carries on.



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*The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is humbled to acknowledge the loss of Claire Tocher. A longtime supporter of our agency both individually and with the P.E.A.R.L Foundation, Claire will be missed.*







## Turning Points 2016

### Nurturing Healthy Families



Above: Poets Jasmine Blackett and Bethan McBreen deliver an incredible spoken word performance.

On Thursday, April 28, 2016, the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter held its 22nd annual Turning Points Gala at the TELUS Convention Centre. Turning Points, Nurturing Healthy Families, celebrated the courageous individuals and families in our community striving to live free from family violence and abuse as well as commemorated the important work of the agency.

The social event featuring Dave Kelly, local poets, and exciting live and silent auctions, raised \$559,644 in support of the agency's innovative programs and services to help build safer, healthier and happier lives for women, children, youth and men.

"Given the economic climate, many Albertans will experience difficulties and uncertainty about the future," says Kim Ruse, Executive Director of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter "During these challenging times, the Calgary community continues to support our work and for this we are very grateful."

Below: Our amazing Turning Points committee & some staff



Thank you to all Turning Points 2016 Sponsors including:

**Platinum:** Cardel Lifestyles and Norris Family Foundation;

**Gold:** Borger Group of Companies, Iconic Power Systems, Newalta and Qualico;

**Silver:** Brookfield Residential, Calgary Sun, Cedarglen Homes, Cedarglen Living, Evolution AV, Giusti Group of Companies, Homes by Avi, Imperial, Royal LePage Solutions and Royal LePage Shelter Foundation;

**Bronze:** ATB Financial, Avison Young, Elegant Woodwork and Construction Ltd; Emerson Clarke Printing; Graycon Group, Hoover Mechanical Plumbing and Heating Ltd., Inland Concrete, Jayman, Joey's Only Franchising Ltd., NexusV, Peter The Plantman, Spencer Stuart and Superior Cabinets.

**Supporters:** Calgary Flames Foundation, Orange Frog Productions Inc., and Werklund Foundation.

**Event Partners:** brooks & dodd consulting inc., Jennifer Butterweck Photography, Dave Kelly, and Kelly Brothers Productions.



## Family Violence Prevention Month

**November** is Family Violence Prevention Month in Alberta. This is a yearly campaign intended to help raise awareness and educate Albertans on how to identify and prevent family violence, as well as ways to support victims experiencing family violence and abuse.

We hope to engage Calgarians in a discussion about family violence while highlighting the resources available for people who are experiencing it and ways the community can support, as well as encourage victims to seek out help.

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter will be teaming up with other Calgary Domestic Violence Collective agencies at the launch of Family Violence Prevention Month, taking place during the Bridging Communities through Strengthened Collaboration Conference on November 1st, 2016 at the Coast Plaza Hotel. The launch will be at 9am and the conference goes until 4:30pm.

Together, we can all Take A Stand Against Family Violence.

## CTV's Toy Mountain 2016



In partnership with CTV Calgary, Brookfield Properties, AMJ Campbell and Castle Toys, the Toy Mountain Campaign takes place from November 21st - December 23rd. With the help of the Toy Mountain Campaign we are able to provide toys and basic needs to our clients not only during the holidays, but throughout the year.

In 2015, more than \$230,000 was collected in cash, toys and other essential items for clients in need at the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. In addition to collecting items and cash donations, the campaign raises awareness around family violence and abuse.

Stay tuned for more information about how you can support vulnerable women and families in the community.



## Hosting an Event

The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is fortunate to have the support of many individuals and groups who want to turn their event into something more meaningful by raising awareness and funds to support victims of family violence and abuse.

In the past few months we have had groups and individuals who make a difference showing their support:

-Groups like the YYC Do-Gooders who raised over \$750 selling flowers for Mother's Day, as well as raising thousands of dollars from their stampede party, "Roundup for Her" to benefit the clients of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter.

-Another great group is the students from Robert Thirsk High School who organized a bake sale collecting cash and toiletries for the women and children in the Shelter.

-Or Maria who celebrated her 27th birthday with this message to her friends, "I have everything I need, it is time to start helping others" with a link to make a donation to the agency.

These groups do so much more than raise funds, they carry the message of hope and spread awareness, "Taking A Stand" against violence and abuse.

Have you considered turning your next dinner party, yoga class, or community event into a meaningful show of support for victims of violence and abuse? It is very rewarding and easy, we can help you. Go to [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com) and click on "Events."



*Left: A sign from the Bake Sale put on by Robert Thirsk High School*

*Right: The YYC Do Gooders at the Roundup for Her event.*



## The Fall Calgary Woman's Show

Join us all weekend at the Fall Calgary Woman's Show on October 22nd and 23rd at the BMO Centre in Stampede Park. We are **Charity of Choice** - our lovely volunteers will be greeting you at the door as well as answering any questions you may have at the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter booth.

The Calgary Woman's Show is celebrating its 33rd year as the longest running woman's show in North America. It is two days of fun, entertainment, education, fashion, celebrity guests and shopping. With over 300 exhibitors, there is something for everyone.

With the help of the Woman's Show the past few years we have been able to raise crucial awareness around family violence and abuse. As the Charity of Choice, we will be able to reach more people in support of those striving to live safer and healthier lives.

We are honoured to be selected as the Charity of Choice and look forward to seeing you there.



## “Put Yourself First” - Kara's Story Continued

We moved to Calgary at the start of the recent economic downturn. I was able to maintain my business but my partner couldn't find a stable job. He opened his own business and it wasn't doing well – this is when the physical abuse started. He would put his hands on me, countless times. My arms were regularly bruised, he would hit me, slap me, pinch me, and force sexual intercourse when I wasn't willing. But amongst the abuse there were also highlights in our relationship. We still travelled together and it wasn't always bad.

For reasons I had yet to realize, I felt a strong calling to get involved with the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. While I was sitting in a presentation from the agency I realized that the victims we were learning about had a lot in common with me. I realized that I myself was a victim and broke down.

This is when I reached out to the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and called the 24-Hour Family Violence Helpline.

I finally had the courage to call it off. At this point, I was attending counselling sessions for over a year and I realized that the relationship was not safe, it was unhealthy, and the situation was not beneficial for either of us.

The aftermath was a rollercoaster ride to say the least. I buried myself in my work and would resort to alcohol to take away the pain.

He would call and beg for me to come back, and he would also threaten to take his own life. The guilt I felt was immeasurable. However, what I came to realize was that these were just words. Life would go on and we would both be better for it.

I began to work on myself and regain confidence and prosperity within my own being, and he went to counselling to work on his abusive tendencies.

I finally started to accept everything and re-establish myself both personally and professionally. I realized that the only one who can truly take care of you, is yourself - that you need to take care of yourself first and foremost. I am happier now, a lot calmer, and above all, am confident that everything is going to be okay.

If I could talk to myself all those years ago or to any other woman who is being abused and feels trapped, I would say to be strong, and to make the call to the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. You need to do it for yourself, and for your children if you have them. Above all, make sure you love yourself – no matter what.

## Adopt a Family at The Shelter

“I really appreciate your donation. It reminds me of the kindness in this world.” – From an “Adopt a Family” client at the Shelter.

You can make a difference in the lives of a family fleeing violence and abuse.

Help us support their stay at the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter and their journey to a life free from violence and abuse. The Emergency Shelter provides women and children a safe haven where we provide meals, clothing, referral services, physical and mental health supports, safety planning, and counselling. By donating funds to Adopt a Family at the Shelter, you will reach out to families throughout the year by helping to ensure their needs are met.

For additional information, or to register, please contact: [info@cwes.ca](mailto:info@cwes.ca) or visit [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com).







## Upcoming Events

Visit [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com) for more information on these exciting events

### SEPTEMBER

#### Shoppers Drug Mart - Growing Women's Health

September 12 - October 7, 2016

Twenty nine stores throughout Calgary will be supporting our agency with 100% of the funds raised being donated in support of our programs and services.

#### Witches Night Out YYC

Saturday September 24, 2016

This annual fundraiser of women dressing up as witches and having some great fun while raising funds and awareness to help other women.

Visit <https://witchesnighoutyyyc.wordpress.com/>

### OCTOBER

#### Calgary Woman's Show – We Are Charity of Choice

October 22 and 23, 2016

#### BMO Centre in Stampede Park

Two days of fun, entertainment, education, fashion, celebrity guests and shopping.

<http://www.calgarywomansshow.com/>

### NOVEMBER

#### Family Violence Prevention Month Launch

Tuesday, November 1, 2016

#### Coast Plaza Hotel

9:00 - 9:30 am- Launch

Taking place at the "Bridging Communities Through Strengthened Collaboration" Conference.

9:30 am - 4:00 pm Conference

#### Family Violence Prevention Month

November 1- 30, 2016

Look out for our banners and signage throughout the month and help Take a Stand Against Family Violence and Abuse.

#### CTV Toy Mountain

November 21- December 23, 2016

Stay tuned for more information about how you can donate funds, provide toys, and basic necessities for women and families this holiday season.

#### Giving Tuesday

Tuesday November 29, 2016

Giving Tuesday is a day dedicated to giving back during the holiday season to help those in need in our community. Make a pledge to Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. Your support will help women, children, youth and men live free of family violence and abuse.

For more info: [www.GivingTuesday.ca](http://www.GivingTuesday.ca).

### APRIL

#### Turning Points 2017

Thursday, April 27, 2017

#### TELUS Convention Centre

Stay tuned for more information about the 23rd annual Turning Points fundraising gala.

### Save A Stamp

We are moving to an electronic version of our newsletter. To be added to our distribution list, please send your full name and email address to [info@cwes.ca](mailto:info@cwes.ca). Please specify E-NEWSLETTER in the subject line.

### It's fast, easy and convenient

Donate online: [www.calgarywomensshelter.com](http://www.calgarywomensshelter.com)

### Share Your Stories

Tell us your story. Inspire others. Change lives. We would like to reach out to past clients, volunteers and staff of Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. We encourage you to share your story and would love to hear from you! For more information: please contact Caitlin at: [caitlins@cwes.ca](mailto:caitlins@cwes.ca)

### Text to Donate

Text ENDABUSE to 587-800-1588. You'll receive a link to complete your donation of any amount by credit card.

Stay in touch by following us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn!

