

Fall 2019

“Interval House helped me to feel strong”

You were there for Natasha when she needed you most



When Natasha* first came to Canada, she'd hoped a new country would bring a fresh start. But the abuse she suffered at the hands of a controlling partner back in Bangladesh continued to escalate. Your support transformed Natasha's life.

“I was told women should stay at home raising the children because that's all we're capable of,” says Natasha. “Interval House helped me feel that I'm strong and I can actually do something more.”

“Before I came to the shelter, I had been so alone.”

When Natasha arrived at Interval House with her two children, she felt lost and alone. She didn't even know what a women's shelter was exactly. “I was so new to this country, I didn't know how things worked,” explains Natasha. “Interval House helped me to sort out

so many things, like how to use the subway and deal with a lawyer and immigration...it was all so helpful.”

Natasha appreciated the diversity of women who make up the Interval House family and the sense of camaraderie. “I saw that I'm not the only one in the world these things happen to,” she says. “Before I came to the shelter, I had been so alone.”

Thanks to the supportive services you make possible, Natasha and her children are rebuilding their lives, free from intimidation and fear.

“Back home I used to be scared of almost everything,” explains Natasha. “Now, I have rented a house and I'm taking care of my two children by myself. I take them to school and their classes, I do the groceries and cooking. I don't feel scared anymore.”

“I am so thankful for Interval House,” says Natasha. “They are my first family here in Canada and I'll never forget them. Never.”

**Natasha's name has been changed to protect her identity and safety.*



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Q & A

with Shirin Vaziri,
Residential Program Manager

Shirin and the Residential Program team play a critical role in supporting the women who come to Interval House. Here’s an inside look at how your support makes a difference.

Q How long have you been with Interval House?

A In December, it will be exactly 10 years. I started as a relief worker and I now oversee the team that looks after everything shelter-related.

Q What happens when you receive a crisis call?

A We answer so many crisis calls on a daily basis. We begin the admissions process over the phone. It’s important to start a safety plan right from that first moment. We want to make sure women know how to leave the abuser safely. We go over logistical details like the need for identification and we ensure women in crisis have all the information and resources they need just in case anything goes seriously wrong.

Q How does the safety plan process differ once a woman is at the shelter?

A We create a safety plan for every resident when they arrive and we review it with them on a weekly basis. We make sure women understand confidentiality and that they shouldn’t give out our address. We’ve actually had men find women here because someone at the shelter gave our address to a friend and the information found its way back to an abuser. We also talk about not using bank machines near the shelter so that abusers with access to those records won’t know where to look. A big part of safety planning these days has to do with technology. For example, a woman needs to make sure to turn off the location on her cell phone. Even a child’s smart toy might be registered under the abuser’s email address and have GPS capability, so everything needs to be turned off.

Q Your job must take a heavy toll on you. What keeps you going?

A It’s emotionally very heavy. Every single day you hear so many stories and all of them are bad. The worst is when children are involved. I remember one time an abuser brought a woman from overseas, sponsored her here, and then didn’t provide food for her. She had to go through the garbage to feed herself and her kids. There are so many stories like that. But I still love my job because we try our best to help as many women, as much as we can. **When you support Interval House you are not just putting a roof over someone’s head, you are empowering women emotionally and financially to break the cycle of abuse.**

By the Numbers

As the first centre for abused women in Canada, Interval House is a leader in the campaign for women's empowerment. Thanks to your support, we've helped thousands of survivors and their children transform their lives, free from abuse. But the fight against gender-based violence is far from over.

Here's why we must keep fighting:

Every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner.

67% of Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse.

Half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.

Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women.

5 ways you can help someone experiencing intimate partner violence

1 Be a good listener

If someone confides in you that they are experiencing intimate partner violence, listen attentively. Believe what they are telling you and ask how you can help.

2 Suspect someone is being abused? Talk about it

If you think someone is being physically or emotionally abused, choose an appropriate time and place to voice your concerns. Ensure your friend's safety and privacy. They may feel helpless, but you breaking the silence could help encourage them reach out for help. If your loved one doesn't want to talk about it, don't push. Just offer reassurance you are there for them if they change their mind.

3 Offer non-judgemental support

If someone tells you that they are being abused, let them know you believe them and that it is never their fault. Explore options with them and offer to help but don't try to tell them what to do. If they decide to stay, try not to judge.



4 Know what to do if you witness abuse

If you see a woman being threatened or assaulted, you don't have to stand by and do nothing. Assess the situation and act accordingly. If you have concerns about safety, call 911.

5 Continue to support Interval House

When you give to Interval House, you help us reach more abuse survivors who need our help. You are transforming more lives than you may ever know. Your compassion really does make a difference!

The ripple effect

Social justice motivates monthly supporter

When Audrey Duff began donating to Interval House in 1994 it was because she had witnessed the effects of abuse first-hand. “I had a friend who was trying to get out of an abusive marriage,” recalls Audrey. “We had an informal support group that would go to court with her.” Another time, Audrey provided transportation to an abused mother of two fleeing from her husband in Nova Scotia.

“I grew up in a very social justice oriented household,” explains Audrey. “I know that positive changes can have a ripple effect far beyond our knowing. I have seen it in my own friends who survived abuse.”

A donor for over 25 years, Audrey chose to give monthly for the many conveniences it offers. “I like monthly giving because it cuts down on my record keeping and decision making,” she explains.

Audrey is pleased with what her gifts have accomplished. “I like that Interval House is stretching every dollar,” she says. “I’m so impressed with what they are able to accomplish to help women acquire skills for a life after abuse and provide children with tools to break the cycle of violence. The whole BESS program I think is amazing.”

To find out if monthly giving is right for you, contact Rachel Ramkaran at rramkaran@intervalhouse.ca or sign up at www.intervalhouse.ca.



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Interval House is a registered Canadian charity with a charitable tax number of 11897 1159 RR0001.

If you'd like more information about how you can support the women and children of Interval House, visit our website www.intervalhouse.ca or call 416-924-1411 ext. 238