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Winter 2020



CANADA'S FIRST
CENTRE FOR
ABUSED WOMEN
AND CHILDREN

#IWD2020: #EachforEqual

In honour of International Women's Day and this year's theme of #EachforEqual, please join Interval House in standing up for equity and justice.



Make a Pledge for Change

I pledge to uphold every woman's right to a life free of fear and violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) can take many forms. It can include sexual, emotional, verbal, financial, psychological, spiritual or physical abuse. It can also include a feeling of constantly being demoralized, lacking autonomy, always "walking on eggshells" — all within your own home.

IPV does not discriminate. It happens across all boundaries and differences. It happens to people from different socioeconomic groups, ethnicities, and religious affiliations and it affects LGBTQ couples and heterosexual couples alike. It happens in marriages, between those that are dating, and in all types of intimate relationships.

It is a violation of enormous proportion, because it happens at the hands of someone trusted. Even more

distressing is that it's hard to calculate the exact number of people impacted by violence, as according to Statistics Canada, 80% of cases go unreported.

The time to act is now. Intimate partner violence is costing lives, it's having a profound effect on our children and it's costing the economy billions (*Canadians collectively spend \$7.4 billion every year to deal with the aftermath of spousal violence alone). It is an epidemic and it needs to stop.

When you support Interval House, you are supporting the change you want to see in the world — a world in which women are honoured, respected and treated as equals. Collectively, we *can* make change happen. Collectively, we can be #EachforEqual.

* Source: www.justice.gc.ca/eng/lrp-pr/cj-jpl/fv-vf/lrr/l2_7/p0.html - sum

How to be an ally

6 practical ways you can help someone experiencing intimate partner violence

1 Listen and believe.

Empower survivors by listening to their experiences without judgement. Believe their story.

2 Remind them: *you're not alone.*

Thank the survivor for trusting you and remind them there are resources, like Interval House, available to help.

3 Ask about their immediate safety.

Check on their safety and help them find available services such as Interval House's crisis line.

4 Respect their decision.

There are many reasons why a survivor may stay with their abuser. Help the person feel supported even if they make a choice you disagree with. Continue to remind them of their worth.

5 Help with safety planning.

Help your friend line up what they need to make a safe exit. You can even keep a bag of exit essentials for them.

6 Have resources on hand.

Interval House's crisis line is available 24-7 at 1-888-293-5516.

IKEA Brightens Children's Lives

Play heals. There's no denying that fun and imagination are essentials when it comes to overcoming childhood abuse. That's why we are so excited to unveil the newly renovated children's playroom in the shelter — generously provided by our friends at IKEA! Complete with brand new books and comfy chairs for reading, hopscotch, plush toys, and a play kitchen that any foodie would envy, the space now truly reflects the spirit of joy and creativity that is central to Interval House's Children's Program. The freshened-up space is the perfect setting for kids to play make-believe and form healthy friendships with the other children in the shelter as they learn a new and happier way of life.

"We are very grateful of this gift from IKEA," says Paula Del Cid, Shelter Services & Outreach Manager at Interval House. "This gift is helping the families see the significance of community, and the importance of giving back to those in need. Now the room feels inviting, open and provides comfort that is so very needed as they navigate life in a shelter. We are excited to see what's to come with all the new memories and

laughter that will radiate out of this spectacular room."

Before the room was officially opened, kids sat on the sofa just outside of it, looking longingly through the window at the bright and colourful space. It's almost as if the room peered longingly back, begging them to make a world of dreams out of the toys and trimmings inside.

Kristle Moring, Communication Responsible for IKEA, Canada, knows just how important it is for children to have a place of their own, especially when overcoming difficult circumstances. "At IKEA, we believe that every child has the right to play and develop in a safe and secure environment," says Kristle. "Our partnership with Women's Shelter's Canada introduced us to the incredible team at Interval House. After speaking with the staff on site, we knew right away that this space needed to feel comfortable, safe and fun for everyone who entered. We were inspired by the children's optimism and positivity to create the mural of inspirational words, in their own writing. The new set-up has dedicated spaces for arts & crafts, imaginative play and spots to read or just relax.

“You are changing the future”

Donor support fuels Liz's journey to freedom

“No! I’m not having this anymore.” With these words, Liz* made the decision to transform her life.

Abused physically, emotionally and psychologically over many years, Liz left her husband the day he threatened to have her young children (1 and 3 years old) taken away from her. “I was living in fear,” explains Liz. “I didn’t see any future.”

Liz found the support she needed at Interval House. “From the moment I came to the shelter I felt like I could breathe again,” recalls Liz. “It was like some weight had been lifted off my chest.”

Knowing she and her babies were finally safe, Liz slept soundly for the first time in years. “The first week at the shelter I was waking up in a daze because I could finally sleep,” she recalls. “I didn’t have to be on edge anymore.”

Soon, Liz began noticing other positive changes. “My concentration is improving and my self-confidence as



well,” says Liz, who also noticed improvements in her children. “Since coming to the shelter, my son has become an emerging butterfly. He can remember more and he’s happier now.”

When asked what message she would like to give Interval House supporters, Liz doesn’t hesitate: “You are giving a lifeline to a woman who has been diminished to feel less than human. Your support helps her strengthen her backbone and step into a direction that she doesn’t believe is possible. You are not only helping her, but her children too. You are changing the future.”

*Name changed for protection



From toddlers to teens, to children at heart, there’s a place for everyone and we can’t wait for the families to enjoy it.”

The team at IKEA entirely captured the needs of Interval House families and transformed the playroom into a small wonderland. Every time we hear children at play laughing, we will be reminded of our gratitude for this wonderful gift.



How one couple is doing their part to end violence against women

Nadia and Chris Bowlby have been married for two years but their relationship started 12 years ago. Their connection with Interval House goes back nearly as long.

A physician from Toronto, Nadia volunteered for Interval House over a decade ago. She remains inspired by the experience. "I still think about the people I met at the shelter," explains Nadia. "I had the opportunity to see firsthand a lot of the amazing things Interval House does to support women and children at such a challenging and fragile time in their lives."

Chris, who works in finance, is especially pleased with the ability of programs like BESS to help establish financial security for women. "We're both really impressed with the BESS program," says Nadia, who got to see BESS in action as a volunteer. "I was so amazed by how this program is tackling financial security and independence in women at so many different levels. Whether that's preparing them for interviews or helping them secure interview clothing, building their confidence to take that next step, helping with housing security and financial security."

The couple attributes their passion for giving back to their large, tight knit families. "Philanthropy is something that has been passed down through my family," explains Chris. "I've always believed in the importance of giving back and helping people in our community who would benefit the most from it." Nadia agrees: "I learned a lot about advocacy and giving back from seeing what my father was doing."

Nadia and Chris are also committed to supporting Interval House for the long-term. "It's really fulfilling to be involved with an organization over a long period of time," explains Chris. "Being a donor at Interval House provides an opportunity to make such a significant impact on the lives of so many women and children that are escaping domestic abuse," adds Nadia. "I think as a society, this is an incredibly important cause to contribute to."

To join Nadia and Chris in giving to Interval House, visit 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