

inside  
MARCH 2022



CANADA'S FIRST  
CENTRE FOR  
ABUSED WOMEN  
AND CHILDREN



# MORE THAN A STATISTIC

We've come a long way, but not far enough

The statistics are staggering. Every six days, a woman is killed by her intimate partner in Canada. When you factor in femicide as a whole – women who are killed by a man – the picture is even more grim.

Every year, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) partners with the University of Guelph to produce a report on the number of femicides in Ontario. Since 1990, they have recorded more than 900 murders of women ... with 58 in the last year alone.

This report and others show a disturbing trend: **violence against women is increasing, especially since the beginning of the pandemic.**

These numbers are important. They tell us the clear, indisputable fact that our society is going in the wrong direction. They point to the change that must be made.

But they don't tell the whole story.

Statistics can never convey the terror of these women's final moments ... or the days and months, even years, of abuse that led up to them. They can never convey the sleepless nights, the hushed phone calls, the excuses for a bruised face or a split lip.

**Behind each statistic is a real woman – a woman who loved and was loved and will be forever missed,** a woman with a unique laugh, dreams of the future and favourite pastimes that gave her joy.

Many of these women had children, who they tried valiantly to protect. These children now have to live with a lifetime of trauma and loss.

**This *cannot* be the new normal. We must do whatever we can to reverse this trend toward violence before more women's lives are lost and more children's lives are shattered. Please join us.**

Give Today at [IntervalHouse.com/Donate](https://IntervalHouse.com/Donate)

# Reclaiming Childhood



## Helping kids heal through play

by Fred Shayo-Mushi, Children Recreation Facilitator

When people ask me what I do at Interval House, I tell them, "I teach kids to play." It might sound like a strange job description, but it's true! For children who have experienced horrific abuse, **learning how to play and be happy again is an important step on their road to healing.**

The kids who live at Interval House have already been through more trauma than most of us can imagine. Sometimes I wonder how they'll ever recover, and if their lives will be ruined for good. It's like the kid in them has gone into hiding.

But then we head outside for a walk. Maybe we watch the trains go by, or visit a petting zoo, or go ice skating for the first time. Sometimes we take a ride on the ferry or see a movie or try to see how many different kinds of flowers we can find.

And then, little by little, I start to see the kid in them again. They laugh at one of my awful jokes. Or show a keen interest in music and art. Or play with a friendly dog at the park. They start re-engaging with the world in a genuine and optimistic way, which gives me great hope for their future.

**Thank you for your support of Interval House. With the love and support you make possible, I know the kids will be alright.**



## LIVES LOST TO VIOLENCE

### Daisy S. Age 46

Daisy will be remembered for her fierce loyalty and integrity by her loved ones. Missed greatly by her mother, sister, brother-in-law, nieces, colleagues and many friends. Charges have not been laid as Daisy's husband killed himself following the murder.

### Kim-Jessica G. Age 33

A bright, energetic and kind young woman whose smile lit up a room. She had recently landed her dream job and had plans to study and travel. Deeply missed by her parents, brother and many friends. Kim-Jessica's husband was charged with second-degree murder.



### Natalie B. Age 39

A bright vivacious woman who loved travelling, listening to music and attending concerts. She dedicated her life to her two young daughters whom she adored. Natalie has left a void in the lives of her parents, siblings, extended family and many friends. Her partner has been charged with first-degree murder.

### Christina Y. Age 36

Christina is described as a strong, independent woman who had a love for animals and a heart of gold. Devoted mother of three, she was excited for the upcoming birth of her son. She has left a void in the lives of her children, mother, siblings and many family members and friends. Her partner has been charged with first-degree murder.



# Building Resiliency in Kids



## Your support helps kids deal with the challenges of the pandemic and more.

by Meredith Gibson, Child and Youth Worker

If you have children in your life, you know the past couple of years have been hard on them. Remote learning, cancelled sports and hobbies, and restrictions on social gatherings have all taken a huge mental health toll on this generation of children.

Now imagine how hard it must be for children going through all this ... while living in a shelter after escaping a violent home.

The kids at Interval House face enormous obstacles to recovery and healing. **But with your support, we're strengthening their resilience and helping them find the happiness and peace they deserve.**

Our professional counsellors spend a lot of time working with the children who have come to us for safety. We help them understand that there are some things they can't control – like the next wave of the pandemic.

But we also give them agency by showing them the things they can control – like washing their hands and wearing masks themselves. We talk a lot about how to recognize and regulate their emotions, which is something else they can control when given the right tools.

Children are resilient, but they can't cope with the double trauma of abuse and the pandemic on their own. **Thank you for being there for kids during this particularly challenging time and giving them the support that they need to heal and move forward.**

### Dalbir R. Age 64

Dalbir will be remembered as a loving mother and devoted community member. She will be missed dearly by her two children, family, friends and neighbours. Dalbir's husband has been charged with second-degree murder.

### Cynthia C. Age 64

Cynthia will be lovingly remembered as a cherished mother who enjoyed travelling and cruises. She has left behind her son, family and friends.



Her boyfriend has been charged with second-degree murder.

### Jane D. Age 19

Deeply missed by her family, friends and community. A bright light extinguished. Her 20-year-old boyfriend was charged with second-degree murder.

### Alyaa A. Age 41

Loving mother of four children, Alyaa will be missed dearly by her children, loved ones and community. Her husband has been charged with first-degree murder.

*Annual Femicide List, November 26 2020 to November 25, 2021, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses.*

# Calm in the Storm

## Growing up at Interval House

*by Randal Williams, former child resident at Interval House*

Interval House made me who I am today – and it all started when I was five years old.

My parents were teenagers in the 70s; my mom had come to Canada from a volatile region of South America, and my dad struggled with alcohol addiction. Eventually, my mom and I ended up at Interval House, a move that had a profound impact on my life.

I still remember the sensation of warmth I experienced when we first arrived. What a luxury it was to be able to close the door to the chaos of the world outside, to have a place to hang up my coat, to be given a plate of warm food. As a child who knew nothing but uncertainty, having my basic needs met was extremely comforting.

Also comforting was the sense of security and stability around me. I could play with kids my own age or with a caring adult. The entire experience had a wonderfully calming effect on my nervous system. I completely melted into it.

I'm now 52 years old, a father of two young adults, and a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology. And I know my experience at Interval House informs how I interact with people. To this day, I have a tremendous sense of empathy for others who are suffering, especially those who are disempowered.

Now that I work in the field of mental healthcare, I have an even greater appreciation for the impact Interval House has on young lives. And I'm thankful to you for supporting this great organization.

## Grateful for a place of refuge

*Ron Getz continues to give in honour of his wife, a childhood abuse survivor*

My late wife Barbara had a very rough start in life, which I didn't learn about until well after we were married. But it's the reason I'm a monthly donor to Interval House to this day.

Barbara's parents split up when she was very young. Her mother remarried, but not to a man – to a monster. The stories Barbara told me are too horrible to share. Eventually, Barbara's grandmother came into town for a visit and was so appalled by what she saw that she packed Barbara up and took her home with her that very day.

It took a lot longer – years, in fact – for Barbara's mother to leave her abuser. But for my wife, the damage had already been done. The trauma of that time never completely left her.

So when Barbara found Interval House, she jumped at the chance to be involved. We went to an open house to learn more about the organization, and she became a monthly donor right there on the spot.

She told one of the staff members, "If this place had been around when I was a child, things might have been different. My mother and I would've had a safe place to escape to."

Barbara passed away two years ago, but I'm still giving monthly to Interval House. I know there are many other kids going through the same kind of horror, and I want to do everything in my power to help them for as long as I can.



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the women and children of Interval House, visit our website  
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