

Winter 1990

Friends of Interval House Newsletter

The Children who live with "Ghosts"

"I'm scared" said one child the morning after arriving at Interval House. When asked what he was scared of he replied, "Ghosts".

The children who come to Interval House have lived with many 'ghosts' - Not the traditional fictional characters but real frightening and painful experiences. They have witnessed countless episodes of abuse heaped upon their mothers and they have seen violence as an effective means of getting control over others.

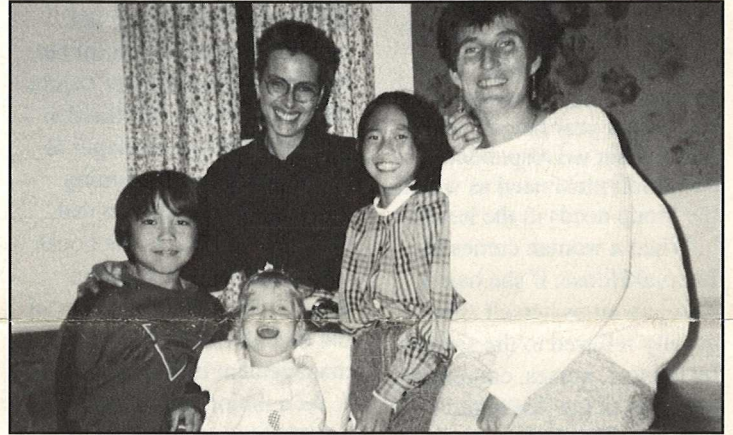
Our goal in the Children's Program is to address the emotional and physical needs of the children during their stay at the shelter. Through individual and group counselling, the kids have an opportunity to talk about their feelings and experiences. There is also a very strong recreational component to our program - it's important that the children just have lots and lots of fun - a time to throw away their worries and run, and

laugh and play.

This summer, we were able to hire four summer students through Federal and Corporate grants. The summer students worked in conjunction with the two Children's Advocates planning and implementing an active ten week recreation program. Amongst the activities were outings to Centre Island, the Zoo, Ontario Place, parks, picnics as well as various arts and crafts such as making masks, jewelry and puppets.

Recently at Interval House we held a Thanksgiving Tea for our special donors. A suggestion was made to make a mural for the tea that somehow represented a fall theme.

Down in the playroom we unrolled a large piece of emerald green corrugated paper. We decided to do hand prints using red, green, purple, white and yellow finger paints. A red bucket was filled with soapy water so we would be ready to wash the sticky, gooey finger paint off our hands.



Marg and Donna, the two children's advocates at Interval House, pose proudly with the "artists" in front of their creation, "The Autumn Leaves".

"Let's make our hands green," chirped three year old Alain. "I like yellow," squealed five year old Ling.

"Red! red! red! is the best colour I like," laughed eight year old Hannah.

"No! no! purple is the colour my hand has to be," exclaimed Johnny, as he plunked his hand into the tray of mauve finger paint.

Within minutes our mural was covered with large and

small hand prints spreading off in different directions. As we sat back and looked at our completed mural it did look somewhat like autumn leaves lying on the ground.

These are the very special moments that make our Children's Program so enjoyable. The sound of carefree laughter and joy in our house has lifted many low spirits. It has made it all so worthwhile.

A Gathering Of Friends

In October this year Interval House hosted an informal Thanksgiving tea for many special donors and friends who have supported us in past years.

It was a very special occasion for the Counsellors and Board of Directors because we finally had the opportunity to meet and thank some of our supporters in person.

Around thirty guests attended our open house. We chatted with them over coffee and dessert, answered questions about our programming and held guided tours around the shelter.

For many of our donors it was the first time they visited

Interval House. We were pleased to be able to show them the general layout of the house, the recent renovations, the fire safety improvements and the children's playroom. In order to maintain the privacy and ensure the security of the women and children who were staying at the shelter, the families were treated to dinner at a restaurant of their choice. Even though it was a cold, rainy, fall day, we were warmed by the strong commitment and support that our donors showed for the women and children who we serve at Interval House. We would like to thank them for taking the time to join us for tea.



Longtime supporter Meg Richardson chatting with staff at Thanksgiving Tea

Still Going Strong Interval House's 17th Anniversary

Nineteen Ninety has been a busy year for those of us who work at Interval House. Over 150 women and children called Interval House "home" from one day to seven months. It has been a year like all other years when we responded to each individual need as well as the group needs in the house.

When a woman comes to Interval House, if she hasn't heard about us herself, she is usually referred to the shelter by doctors, nurses, community agencies or the Assaulted Women's Helpline.

As each woman comes into the shelter she is assigned a Family Support Team which consists of two or three counsellors and a children's advocate. This team ensures that the woman and her children have all the basic necessities for her stay at Interval House. This includes everything she may need to make her stay as comfortable and welcoming as possible: from minor needs such as toiletries, toothbrushes, shampoo, clothing and bedding to major needs such as individual counselling, court support, information on housing, children's counselling, and referrals to different social service agencies available in Toronto.

Apart from the daily routines of managing the house, in the past year, counsellors, residents and the

administrative staff survived the trials and tribulations of life during renovations to the shelter. Interval House not only looks more beautiful but it's now safer and more secure than ever before. We hired a permanent house manager to keep the house functioning smoothly and to ensure that our "investment" in the house is maintained. This person takes on the responsibilities of the overall maintenance and management of the house.

As a major part of our continuing commitment to provide the best service possible to the women and children who need our help, Interval House researched and evaluated our own Ex-Resident Program. We found that many women and children still needed support, information and referral after they left our shelter. A package has now been designed to be

given to women as they leave Interval House. It is full of useful information and community resources to help them start new lives with their families. This package is one of the initial stages we are planning to implement to help a woman survive on her own - many for the first time in their lives.

The staff and counsellors are looking forward to the Winter Celebration Xmas Party with great anticipation. Every year 200 or more Ex-Residents and Residents drop by for turkey dinner and presents. The children join in the festivities, sing Xmas Carols and visit Santa Claus.

It's a very special time - a time when the Staff and Board catch up and share their news with many of our ex-residents and their kids who haven't visited the shelter for many years.

Our Services

Telephone distress counselling

Emergency Accommodation, food and clothing for 22 women and children fleeing family violence.

Counselling and group discussions to help women sort out tangled marital, legal, health, child care and housing problems.

Referrals to a wide range of community services and government agencies.

Referrals to knowledgeable and sympathetic lawyers who accept Legal Aid clients.

Accompaniment for women to go to court or return to the marital home for personal belongings.

Ex-resident outreach program which includes advocacy, counselling and support.

Children's services including individual and group counselling, referrals and advocacy.

In order to reach new people who would like to be part of Interval House's work, we trade our mailing list with other like-minded groups. If you prefer not to have your name on the exchange list, please let us know. Just write us and arrangements will be made immediately.

Like wise, if you only wish to receive one mailing from us a year, just drop us a line.

Interval House 1989 - 1990 General Statistics

Number of Families served in 1989: 51

Total Number of people served including children: 150

Country of origin: Canadian - 50%

Immigrant - 50%

Average number of times assaulted before they leave: 20

Percentage of children abused by partner: over 50%

Percentage of women who called police during assault: over 50%

Percentage of assault charges laid by police: 12%

Percentage of assault charges laid by women: 24%

Percentage of women who become sole support mothers after they leave shelter: 50%

Percentage of women who return to spouse: 25%

Interval House

596 Huron Street Toronto Canada M5R 2R7 (416) 924-1491
a shelter for battered women and their children since 1973



Charitable Number 0421289-09-13

a United Way member agency

