



# friends of Interval House

FALL  
2001

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## Reinventing, Rebuilding and Transforming Women's Lives

In the midst of helping to transform women's lives, Interval House is transforming itself and expanding the term "shelter" to include the Building Economic Self-Sufficiency Program. This program builds on women's abilities not only to escape violence but to stand strong in their own communities.

B.E.S.S.'s mission is to help women move towards their goals of becoming economically independent by providing information, referrals and support services.

Marg Moffat, Interval House B.E.S.S. Program Co-ordinator, explains the program's rationale: "Women seek refuge in shelters to escape the violence in their own homes. But their journey to freedom has just begun. In the safety of the shelter, they face the challenge of healing and rebuilding their confidence. And these challenges continue

• Barrier Reduction Strategies – assists to reduce the impact of barriers to programs and services.

Through participation in B.E.S.S., women access programs and services related to strengthening their social supports, personal abilities and work-related skills. And B.E.S.S. isn't exclusive to residents of Interval House: the program is open to all women survivors of partner abuse.

**The B.E.S.S. program is about encouraging women survivors of abuse to make and sustain positive life changes.**

Marg explains, "The first stage in their healing is an awareness and commitment to 'change'. At B.E.S.S., we help women mobilize that energy to make change happen. Each woman has different needs. Sometimes we're talking about literacy or numeracy skills. Other times, we're finding ways to get women who have existing skills or trades to hone those skills for work. In some cases, we need to start with community programs on life skills before we approach the issue of work. We encourage women to reach for their goals and dreams for a better tomorrow."

The path of building economic self-sufficiency is intensely personal. The program is fluid and flexible – allowing women to participate at their own pace.

Marg continues, "We're committed to keeping time restraints out of the equation. Some women may take several steps forward and then a couple steps back. What's

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long after they leave the shelter. Many women who leave violent relationships experience additional barriers to employment, education and training."

And so B.E.S.S. was born.

The B.E.S.S. program provides:

- Information, Referral and Case Management - providing women with information, referral and support to access programs and services in the community that will help them achieve their goals.



Cynthia Head and Marg Moffat, B.E.S.S. Program Co-ordinators



# cleo – Fashion Consciousness

Dress it up any way you like – the women's clothing retailer cleo has made a tremendous contribution to Interval House.

On September 4, 2001 – the grand opening of the new cleo store at the TD Centre in Toronto – 20% of all sales supported our shelter.

Lesley Ackrill from Interval House's Resource Development team explains, "Interval House received a generous donation from cleo, and we were able to do outreach to women who may need help and build public awareness. Being affiliated with such an exciting and innovative women's fashion retailer gives us so many opportunities. We are deeply grateful."

"Cleo embodies a spirit of community that is so inspiring," Ms. Ackrill continues. "Interval House respects their commitment to

the women and children in our communities who are breaking free from violence."

Sensational clothes and a socially conscious dedication to helping others – with this 'fashion consciousness,' cleo is a great example of a caring corporation. ✨



(L to R) Elizabeth Creasy, Patricia Lovett-Reid, Anastasia Lekas, Interval House representatives Lesley Ackrill and Arlene McCalla, and Susan Hay.

## "Reinventing" continued...

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important is that women are leading themselves."

It is a testament to the tremendous survival spirit of Interval House that we have so many success stories from the B.E.S.S. program....women like Sara.

Sara was a teacher before she came to Canada. When she was ready to leave the shelter and start her own life, she told us that she wanted to get her teaching credentials recognized in Ontario. We were able to assist her through the process of credential

assessments, language assessments, and upgrading requirements. During this process there were additional challenges related to childcare, and unresolved custody issues. Sara's resolve was impressive. This past summer, Sara came to the shelter waving her letter of eligibility from the Ontario Teacher's College in the air. Her grin was enormous.

The B.E.S.S. program is about encouraging women survivors of abuse to make and sustain positive life changes. It's about helping each other stand together and stand strong. ✨

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