

Corporate gift is still one person reaching out to another



Members of the band, Proxy Set (from l to r): John Baker, Marshall Baglieri, Rodrigo Fernandez-Stoll, Adam Paul, and Michael Caruso.

One of the central miracles of Interval House is the generosity of individuals like you who reach out to help women fleeing abusive relationships.

But you might not be aware that the same personal motivation to help abused women is also behind the corporate donations that Interval House receives.

One prime example is Collega Aveda, the Canadian distributor for Aveda natural beauty products and the owner of four Civello salons in Toronto. Recent major donations from the company were driven by two people who had been inspired by the work done at Interval House. One is a principal of the company, while the other is a front line worker in the Uptown salon.

"Honestly, the issue just spoke to my heart," says Raffaella Caruso, Senior Vice President of Finance and Operations of Collega Aveda. She first became an Interval House supporter about five years ago when she received a package in the mail.

"Many years before, I had worked for a church parish. We supported a number of causes, including abused women. I felt that not a lot of people knew what a large issue it was in our society," she says.

"I'm a bit of a feminist, in that I feel that women still don't have equality, and I was identifying with that need,"

she continues. "It's also an issue that affects children and families. I have been blessed with a large, strong family where nothing like this has ever happened, so I wanted to find a way to give back."

Raffaella's next step was to ask Collega Aveda employees to bring back the free hotel toiletries from their travels for the women of Interval House.

"I wanted to do something for a charity that really needed my help..."

Then this past fall, she proposed to her partners that their annual Holiday donation of \$10,000, in lieu of staff gifts, be given to Interval House.

"I believe in the great work that's being done at Interval House and I continue to feel strongly about its importance," explains Raffaella. "As well, our staff and clientele are predominately female, so it's an issue with which they could identify."

About the same time, Simeon Ross, a front line staffer at Civello's Uptown salon, was choosing Interval House as the beneficiary of a special event he was planning.

"I'd been thinking that causes like cancer and diabetes get so much support and I wanted to do something for a charity that really needed my help," says Simeon.

"Helping abused women is a cause that I really believe in," he explains. "I had a friend who was in an abusive relationship for four years. It was really frustrating for me to watch, because she was very cool and smart, but her personal life was just a mess. I and my friends tried to help her, but we really didn't know what to do."

Simeon wanted to help make sure that Interval House could be there for abused women who find the courage to break the cycle of violence.

So he rallied his fellow staffers and put on a huge company holiday party at the El Mocambo. Simeon's own band, Members of the Press, played for the crowd along with Proxy Set, featuring the son of Raffaella Caruso. The night also included a fashion show and a silent auction of artwork, photography and jewellery created and donated by employees.

"The club was jammed, with about 400 people at \$5 a head, which together with the auction proceeds raised \$3,000 for Interval House," says Simeon. "It was a really fun night and I plan to hold more fundraising events for Interval House this year."

As you can see, one person can make a huge difference! If you'd like to organize a fundraising event, or work on a corporate donation from your company, call Lesley Ackrill or Nadine Chan at (416) 924-1411, ext. 224 or 225.

