

inside

OCTOBER 2021



CANADA'S FIRST
CENTRE FOR
ABUSED WOMEN
AND CHILDREN

Bruised Fruit: The Rotten Truth

Reaching Women in One of the Only Places **They're Free to Go**

Since the onset of the pandemic, intimate partner violence has increased by more than 30 percent in Canada. The message from governments and public health officials has been clear: **“Go home and stay home.”**

But often, home is the most dangerous place of all. Women are trapped at home with their abusers, with few opportunities to get away and reach out for help. A simple phone call for help can put a woman's life in danger.

There is one place women can go to get away from their abuser: *the grocery store*. So, we created the “Bruised Fruit” awareness campaign as a way to let them know they can turn to Interval House for help.

The campaign, which took place during July and August at Toronto's The Big Carrot Community Market and Unboxed Market, featured what was at first glance a free stand of bruised, over-ripened apples. But each apple had a produce sticker with a fact about the increase in domestic violence – facts such as, “During the pandemic, abusive relationships become more physically violent.”

Most importantly, the produce sticker allowed us to provide crucial information, such as our 24/7 crisis line, in a discreet way that could be easily concealed from an abuser or passed along to friend or family member.

Postcards and in-store signage provided even more information – both for women experiencing abuse and to raise awareness among the general public.

“It's the perfect storm”, says Paula Del Cid, Manager of Shelter Services and Outreach. “Women are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence than ever, and it's also harder than ever for them to reach out for help. The bruised apples are a way to get them the information they need, secretly and safely.”

Watch the video about the Bruised Fruit campaign at

intervalhouse.ca/bruisedfruit



Scan this QR code with your phone's camera to watch a video about the Bruised Fruit campaign.

Give Today at IntervalHouse.ca/Donate



Making Health *and* Safety a Priority

by Paula Del Cid, Manager – Shelter Services & Outreach

It's hard to believe we're still in the midst of the pandemic. And yet our commitment to the health and safety of women experiencing intimate partner violence has not wavered.

I'm pleased to tell you that as of this writing, **Interval House has not seen a single case of COVID-19. And it's all because of you!**

Thanks to your committed support, we've been able to take extra measures to keep our residential program as healthy as possible, so women continue to feel safe coming to us.

One of the newest initiatives you made possible was the development of five isolation suites for residents who may need to quarantine. Many other shelters use hotel rooms when their clients need to isolate due to a positive COVID test result, close contact or travel.

But for women experiencing abuse, a hotel can be a frightening place, without support or security. That's why these isolation suites inside our secure residence are so important. Here, women in isolation can know they are safe and benefit from daily check-ins by our staff. They're still able to access counselling and continue working toward a future of safety and independence. They don't need to put their life on pause, again!

Each suite is lovingly prepared in advance with every amenity in mind for the resident who will be staying there. If it's a mom with a toddler, we stock it with toys, games and books. If it's a single woman, we make sure she has plenty of novels to read and some adult colouring books. Additionally, each suite comes equipped with an ensuite bathroom, a mini-fridge, microwave, flatscreen tv, coffee maker, a laptop, and much more. While residents isolate, we also offer room service for meals to ensure their utmost comfort.

No woman should have to choose between experiencing abuse at home or risking her health by asking for help. As we deal with the fourth wave of the pandemic, it's more important than ever to ensure Interval House stays safe *and* healthy, for every woman and child who needs it.

With your support, we are continuing to do whatever it takes to create a safe, welcoming and healthy place for women and children fleeing abuse during the pandemic. Thank you for standing beside us, every step of the way.



A Legacy of Kindness

Many a Mickle Makes a Muckle

by Legacy Donor Sylvia McPhee



Thirty-five years ago, I noticed a rather curious sight down the street from my dentist: various women and children coming and going from a small house. It wasn't a store or a pediatrician's office, and I couldn't for the life of me figure out what was going on.

Well, I'm an inquisitive person at heart, so I summoned the courage to walk up to this house, knock on the door, and ask why they were there and what they were doing. And that one knock changed my life.

It was Interval House, of course. They invited me inside and offered me a cup of tea, and then explained that they offered safety – and a lot more – to women and children fleeing violence.

Well, once I found out what they did, I immediately knew I had to help. I started by donating clothes. Every time I dropped off a pair of slacks or a nice blouse, I thought about the woman who would wear them. Maybe she'd wear them to a job interview, and my clothes would help give her confidence.

Eventually, I started donating money every year as well. And more recently, I decided to make a gift to Interval House in my Will.

Why? Because I believe everyone deserves a safe home. My heart breaks when I think of the women and children who live in pain and fear. It's just not right. They need a safe, stable home to live in while they rebuild their lives, and that's exactly what Interval House is.

Sadly, brutal relationships will always be with us. But that doesn't mean there's nothing we can do about it. As for me, I'm going to do whatever is in my power, now and when I'm gone, to help these women and children break free from abusive relationships.

I've talked to my family about my decision to leave a gift in my Will, and they all think it's a great idea. It's also how I want to be remembered – as someone who never stopped caring.

There's an old Scottish phrase, "many a mickle makes a muckle."

It means that when we all give whatever we can, big or small, it adds up to make a big impact. That's what I'm doing by leaving a gift in my Will – and I hope you'll join me. We can all do our part to make the world a safer place for women and children.

If you'd like to find out more, please reach out to Cheyanne at crichardson@intervalhouse.ca or 416-924-1411 ext. 231.



Your Words of Encouragement

Supporters like YOU share their personal reasons for supporting women and children fleeing intimate partner violence

I hate the fact that women are led to believe that they aren't worth anything. Women need financial means to leave, and support to navigate and leave that situation behind them.

Everyone deserves to be in a safe space. Thank you for the important work you do.

Children and women should never have to live in fear.

Because I was a victim at one time.

I believe in helping women and children. And violence within the home is especially damaging and extremely dangerous. I want to help save lives.

Many years ago, Interval House took me in (and my baby). It changed my life.

It is so important to do so that the pain of intimate partner violence does not get carried into the next generation.

Everyone has the right to a safe environment and to be able to reach their full potential as human beings.



Everyone has a right to live in safety. I give because that is only a dream for so many.



Thank you for sharing your motivation, your kindness and your incredible compassion with us! YOU make a new future possible for women and children fleeing abuse.



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