

# Crisis centre opens next month

By ANN FARRELL  
Star staff writer

Women in Transition, (WIT) a new refuge for women in a crisis situation, is due to open at the beginning of February at 374 George St., near Gerrard and Jarvis.

Natalie Hoffman, 30, co-ordinator of the project, says she and her organization will be in contact with Interval House, a similar project which opened on Spadina Rd. last year.

Catering to women who are leaving their husbands, or have been deserted or thrown out on the street in the middle of the night, the refuge was described by Natalie as a centre which "will give women total support while they are with us."

## Need money

"While here, they will have a chance to think and make some decisions; to talk things out. We will help find housing, or jobs, and help those who may need to go back to school in order to achieve independence."

Pat Gardner, another WIT worker, says: "It's important for a woman in this type of circumstance not to move from one drastic situation into another, to exchange one severe problem for another."

This project was funded in December through a Local Initiatives Program grant of \$7,640. Natalie says they urgently need more money. More immediately they are out "scrounging" for blankets, toasters, hand tools, supplies of Band-aids and toilet paper by the binful.

"Our major benefactors," says Natalie, "have been the people on the street,



HOME CARPENTRY will be one of the skills to be taught at Women in Transition, a new crisis centre for females. At the left is Mary Orr; on right, Cris Granham.

average, everyday people. But we have had some fantastic luck. Bad Boy gave us a kitchen table, and a coffee table. We received soup from Campbell Soup Co., a bath room supplies from James B. McGregor, a manufacturer, and a new shovel and an ice pick from Canadian Tire."

The organization has eight full-time workers and a hopefully growing number of volunteers. It is expected

that women taking refuge with WIT will stay there only four or five days.

"We can accommodate 12 people, including children. There are enough bedrooms that mothers who do not wish to share with their children, can be alone."

Natalie Hoffman feels deeply about women who have to learn to fend for themselves. A widow herself, she grew up in Tim-

mins and spoke French, Russian and Hebrew before she spoke English.

She spent some years in Israel on a kibbutz and has been in community projects in Don Vale. She says that in her opinion refuge houses like Interval House and WIT are required throughout the city.

She and Pat Gardner, who studied child care, psychology and sociology in the U.S., stress that their program is not geared for long-term residents. In addition, they are not prepared to accommodate any woman with a history of alcoholism or drug usage.

## Play by ear

"Of course, we shall have to play things by ear," commented Natalie.

"Although we would not refuse refuge to a woman who was coming to us the second time around, we intend to guard against anyone who shows signs of making a habit of this sort of thing. After all, there are far too many people needing help."

Women in Transition has a waiting list before it opens. Interval House will send its overflow and Metro Police 51 Division has said it has a number of cases to refer once the centre is open.

In the meantime, the eight workers spend their days and nights with paint brushes and hammers. Mary Michalak is taking a fix-it course in order to be able to help with the odd jobs.

Women in Transition can be reached at 967-5227.



Ann Landers

# Wife thinks car is cracker crumber

Dear Ann Landers: I don't know whether newspaper columnists have an unspoken agreement not to rat on each other, but I do hope you will print this letter in the public interest. Will you please suggest to those household-hint writers that they print only suggestions which are practical and sensible? A lot of nutty women will try anything they see written up as a "work-saver."

My not-so-bright wife read in the paper that a good way to save time when making cracker crumbs is to put the whole box of crackers in a plastic bag and ride over it with a car.

A rolling pin costs 50 cents. Our car cost \$4,500. My wife asked me last night to please get the wide, 70-series tires because they would make better cracker crumbs. Knowing my wife as I do, I'm sure she will nag me until I get those new tires. We don't need new tires, Ann Landers. What do you suggest now?—IRRITATED.

Dear I: Sorry, I've got all I can do to respond to readers who have legitimate complaints against my advice. I can't handle beefs directed at other columnists. Why don't you write to Whatzname?

## Marks of honor

Dear Ann Landers: Please tell those middle-aged ladies with beautiful bodies to quit referring to "stretch marks" from childbirth as ugly. Usually they ask you how to get rid of them.

I am 26 years old and have three lovely children. I have stretch marks on my breasts as well as my abdomen and hips. I do not consider them ugly, and neither does my husband. They are the scars I bear as a result of having children. If you print my letter, it might help other women with stretch marks feel less ashamed.—MAMA.

Dear Mama: Here it is—and now take that and that, you gals out there who are ashamed of your stretch marks. They're your medals for motherhood! Cheer up.

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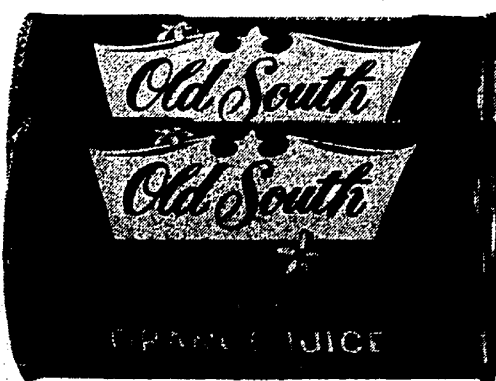


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