



Fall 2020 newsletter



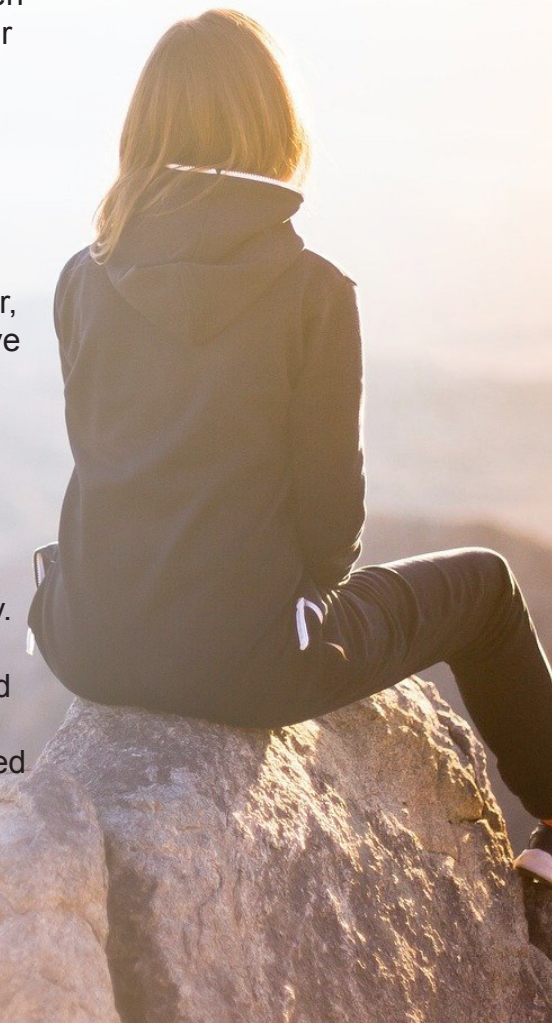
"Without the support of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, I don't know where I'd be today."

Supporting Families Through any Crisis: PAMELA'S STORY

After staying at the Emergency Shelter for some time, I was referred to the Community Services Counselling Program. My partner was verbally, emotionally, and financially abusive. He would yell at me in public and always belittle me. The abuse escalated into physical intimidation when he started putting his fist through the bedroom walls and assaulted our pregnant daughter. He often threatened to commit suicide if I left and would harass me at our shared place of work.

When I first visited my counsellor, I cried. I knew my partner was abusive, but I was in denial that the relationship had fallen apart, I still had hope to reconcile. I still cared for him deeply and was dependent on him, and excused his actions. I always saw myself as the caretaker, responsible for everyone else and unable to say no. Through extensive counselling, self-reflection and the support of my counsellor, I was able to identify these issues and explore them. I realized I was not responsible for other people's actions and became more aware of my own needs and how to fulfil them while setting healthy boundaries with those around me. I could say "no" when I needed to and went on to carry out many personal achievements. Without the support of the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, I don't know where I'd be today.

Once ashamed, I am now eager to share my story. When I first walked into the Emergency Shelter I thought "women like me don't go to shelters," because I was educated and successful. I have since learned that my experience of abuse is not uncommon, that violence has no boundaries and happens to people from all walks of life. I hope to inspire other women to seek out the safety and support they need.



Message from our Chief Executive Officer

KIM RUSE



It is hard to believe that we are already into the fall season. This year has been a long challenging time in so many ways. For many people, the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter is a symbol of safety and hope, providing support during dangerous situations, and in any crisis.

Through all the anxiety of the pandemic and economic uncertainty, we remain focused on supporting those impacted by family violence and abuse in our community. We know the fall comes with a new set of challenges and unknowns, surrounding school restarting, influenza season, and fluctuating COVID-19 numbers. We continue to adapt and learn to ensure our clients and staff remain safe and healthy.

Our programs and services continue in a virtual setting, and we are carefully and slowly planning the relaunch of services that were re-deployed at the start of the pandemic.

- Our 24-Hour Family Violence Helpline and Emergency Shelter remain open 24/7.
- The Men's Counselling Service, Community Services Counselling and Take A Stand webinars are still being offered virtually.
- The Child, Youth and Family and Healthy Relationships programs have reopened in a digital setting. As schools have begun to re-open, our team is prepared to provide group and individual online sessions to youth.

To ensure the wellbeing of clients and staff, we actively monitor the rapidly evolving situation, paying special attention to advice from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer, and regularly review protocols and processes to make sure we keep up to date.

We continue to encourage those experiencing family violence and abuse to reach out. Whether you are a victim, a friend or family looking to support someone or men looking for help, you are not alone. We are here to help.

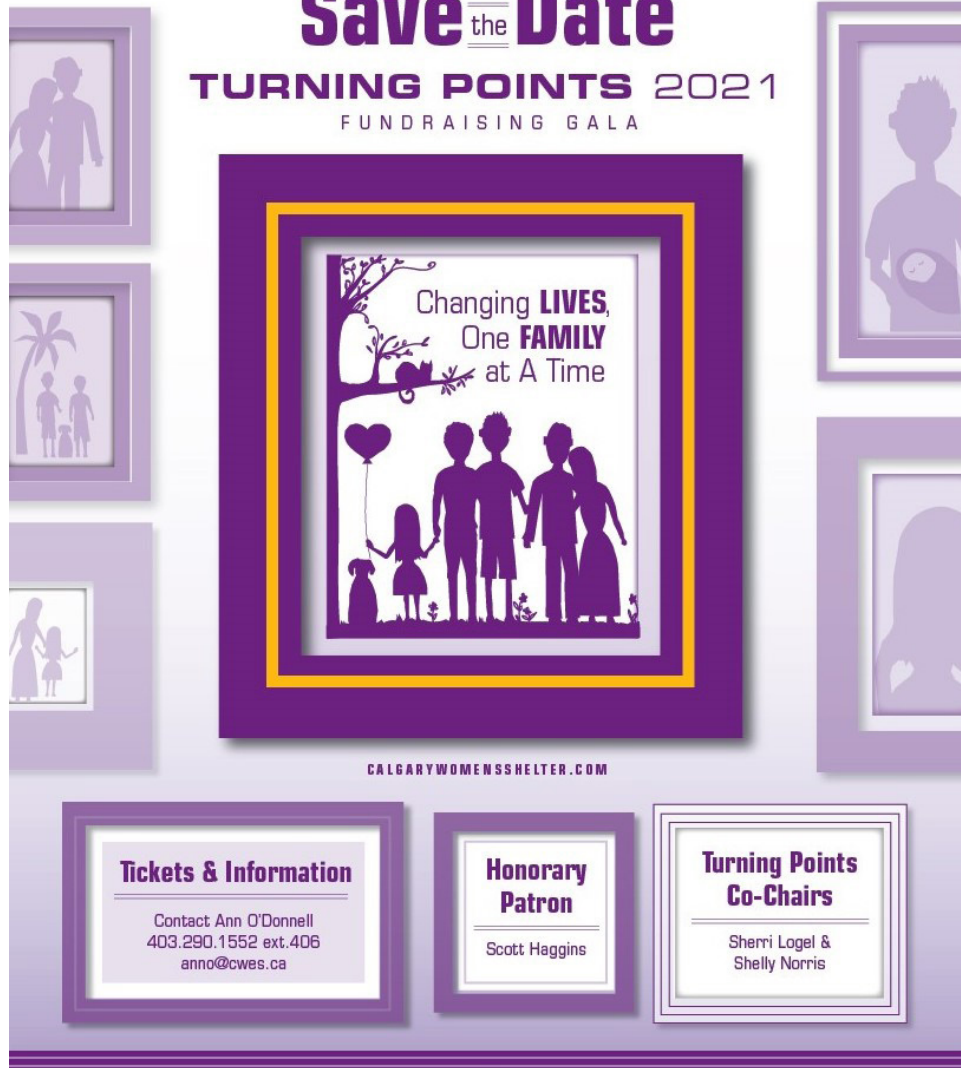
The demanding work of our agency, especially during this critical time is made possible because of the unwavering commitment from our funders, donors, sponsors, supporters, volunteers and staff. Thank you for your generous and ongoing support.

This next year will remain difficult, but we go into it wiser and stronger. We continue to look at innovative ways to raise the bar for our service delivery, reach out to our community more effectively, as well as engage with our partners to help end family violence and abuse. We are all in this together and we promise to do our level best to support women, children, youth and men in our community.

Save the Date

TURNING POINTS 2021

FUNDRAISING GALA



After cancelling Turning Points 2020 due to COVID-19 we are excited to invite you back next year. While we are disappointed to cancel the Gala this year, the safety of our guests, attendees and staff is our top priority. We believe waiting until next year will allow us to safely organize our gala where we can all enjoy it to the fullest.

Turning Points – Changing LIVES, One FAMILY at a Time will celebrate the courageous individuals and families in our city, striving every day to live free from violence and abuse, as well as commemorate the important work of our agency.

Join us Thursday, April 29, 2021 at the TELUS Convention Centre.

Turning Points reflects on the work of our agency while looking ahead at the work that still needs to be done to put an end to family violence and abuse. Emceed by Dave Kelly, the gala will feature a dinner, raffles, an auction and inspiring stories.

Proceeds will fund much-needed programs and services which help women, children, youth, and men impacted by family violence and abuse.

For more information about purchasing a table or sponsorship opportunities:
www.calgarywomensshelter.com | or (403) 290-1552 ext. 410 | info@cwes.ca.

Na'amat Canada Calgary

Donor Spotlight



Na'amat, a name derived from the Hebrew acronym meaning “Movement of Working Women and Volunteers”, is the largest women’s movement in Israel. The goal of the organization is to empower and improve the lives of women and children of all faiths and backgrounds. Since being formed 35 years ago, Na'amat Canada Calgary has been focused on supporting women and children experiencing family violence and homelessness.

When the group was faced with the question of how best to help the local community, the idea for “School Supplies for Kids” was born. Stephanie Sacks, the first President of the Calgary Chapter, started the program 23 years ago and has been the chairperson since. “In Calgary our members wanted to do a project that would help abused and homeless women and their children locally,” says Stephanie, “Backpacks and school supplies seemed to be a need in shelters and that is how our school supplies for kids program got started.” A committee of ten sources out and orders the school supplies and backpacks early in the year and volunteers spend a full day packing the backpacks. Everything from pencils and pens, to binders and notebooks are included for children and youth.

Since starting as a way to support one domestic violence shelter, the program has grown into a large-scale annual donation of over 1,000 backpacks to multiple shelters in Calgary and across Southern Alberta. To date they have distributed over 22,000 backpacks. Though the group faced challenges this year with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the committee persevered and pulled everything together. “I never thought we couldn’t do it - It just wasn’t an option,” states Stephanie, “Normally we have 90 volunteers in the warehouse on packing day, but this year we adjusted the process, lowered the number of volunteers to ensure physical distancing, and packed over two days. We pulled together and managed to deliver what we set out to do.”

The Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter has been a grateful recipient of this generous support since the beginning. This annual donation allows us to provide the necessary help throughout the year to our families served across all our programs. This year we received an incredible 200 backpacks filled with supplies ready for children and youth.

We thank Na'amat Canada Calgary for their ongoing support and generosity.

Pet Friendly Rooms: Shelter for the whole family

In memory of Jasmine and Aliyah

Our pets are part of the family and aren't generally thought of as barriers, yet they often are for women fleeing violence and abuse. It can be nearly impossible to think about leaving them behind. It's already challenging enough to make the decision to leave and figure out how to keep safe, to also worry about what to do with a pet.

Not having a place for pets to go often stop women from leaving abusive and dangerous situations. Victims will delay leaving because they fear for the safety of their pets, and many consider returning to their partner because of their pets. Many women are unaware that there are options for keeping their pets safe while finding safety for themselves and their children.

With the generous support of the *With Her Gala* which took place last November, our agency now has pet-friendly rooms. This program honours Jasmine Lovett and Aliyah Sanderson, a mother and daughter who lost their lives to violence. This past June, two rooms in our Emergency Shelter have been transformed to accommodate small animals that arrive with women escaping violence.

Allowing pets in the Shelter will help provide emotional and healing support for women and their children during their stay, and can be life changing in their journey.



Family Violence Prevention Month - November

November is Family Violence Prevention Month in Alberta. Throughout this time, we are able to raise awareness and educate Albertans about how to identify and prevent family violence and abuse, as well as ways to support victims. During this month we hope to encourage discussion and highlight the resources available at our organization and in the community. Everyone plays a key role in providing support and encouraging victims to seek help.

Together, we can all Take A Stand Against Family Violence and Abuse by focusing our efforts to increase awareness and promote prevention and public education.

Stay tuned for more information about upcoming events and promotions taking place throughout the month.

Shelterlink App

To serve our clients more effectively and provide much needed and efficient support, a few years ago, our agency initiated a process to look at a coordinated phone line and intake for Emergency Shelters in and around Calgary. Leaving home to seek refuge in an Emergency Shelter is frightening and stressful enough but we realized that finding a Shelter with available space wasn't always easy for our clients.

This past Spring, in collaboration with YW Calgary, Rowan House, Wheatland Shelter and Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, the Shelterlink app was created. Shelterlink is a useful tool which allows agencies to share information on vacancies with each other and keep room availability up-to-date. The app is accessible to Shelter staff without exchanging client data. In a couple of quick clicks, staff are able to see available rooms at each Shelter.

This new system enables each agency to better serve clients and help those fleeing dangerous situations find safety and support in a timely manner.



CTV Toy Mountain

November 16 – December 23

We are excited to partner once again with CTV Calgary, CJAY92, Virgin Radio, Funny Radio, Brookfield Properties, and AMJ Campbell for CTV's Toy Mountain Campaign from November 16 - December 23. The campaign helps us collect funds, basic essential items and toys needed not only during the holidays, but all year round. In addition to collecting items and cash donations, the campaign raises awareness around family violence and abuse.

With COVID-19 precautions this year, the campaign will be a bit different. Stay tuned for more details on how you can support vulnerable families in our community.



Events

Shoppers Drug Mart LOVE YOU program October 3 - 30

40 stores throughout Calgary will be raising funds in support of our programs and services.

Family Violence Prevention Month

Check back for more information on ways you can Take A Stand Against Family Violence and Abuse during the month of November.

CTV Toy Mountain

November 16 - December 23

Stay tuned for more information about how you can donate funds, and provide basic necessities and toys for families this holiday season.

Giving Tuesday

December 1

Giving Tuesday is a day dedicated to giving back during the holiday season to help those in need in our community. Make a pledge to the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. Your support will help women, children, youth and men live free of family violence and abuse.

Calgary Expo

April 22-25, 2021 - BMO Centre

Visit our booth at one of Calgary's biggest fan culture attractions. calgaryexpo.com

Turning Points

April 29, 2021 - Telus Convention Centre

Our signature annual fundraising gala. Enjoy an elegant evening, an auction and raffles while raising money for our agency.

Host an Event virtually and stay socially distanced while raising awareness and funds for a cause!

Give us a call and we can help you come up with some fun and interesting ideas.

**Donation line: 403-539-5130 or
info@cwes.ca.**

Save A Stamp

To be added to our distribution list for our e-newsletter, please send your full name and e-mail address to info@cwes.ca. Please specify E-NEWSLETTER in the subject line.

Share Your Stories

Tell us your story. Inspire others. Change lives. We would like to reach out to past clients, volunteers and staff of Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter. We encourage you to share your story and would love to hear from you! For more information: please contact Hanna at: HannaD@cwes.ca

It's fast, easy and convenient

Donate online

www.calgarywomensshelter.com

Text to Donate

Text ENDABUSE to 587-800-1588. You'll receive a link to complete your donation of any amount by credit card.



@end_abuseyyc



@end_abuse



Stay in touch with us!