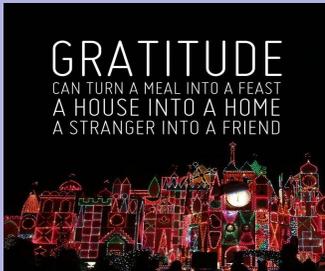




# My Friend's House News

## A Message From The Executive Director



**“Gratitude: the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness”.**

One of the most powerful words in the dictionary. When I think about how to sum up 2015, in one word, “gratitude” keeps coming into my head. There is so much to be grateful for at My Friend’s House. I am grateful for a staff that will stop at nothing to provide counselling to anyone who calls or walks through our doors – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. I am grateful to our volunteers and board members for tirelessly giving their time. I am grateful the supporters of My Friend’s House who, with their voices, dollars and red shoes stand up and say “Enough – Abuse, to anyone, will no longer be tolerated in our community.” I am grateful for the partnerships with incredible lawyers, doctors, health care professionals and other supporting organizations that include us in their teams. I am grateful for a government that values the importance of funding safe havens for women and their children enduring abuse. I am grateful for the courage that the women who enter our doors come with and I am grateful, and humbled, for the hope they leave with. For this, I am truly grateful. –Alison FitzGerald

Winter 2015-2016

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## November is “Woman Abuse Prevention Month” in Ontario

Did you know that spousal abuse has been consistently identified as one of the most common forms of violence against women in Canada? The numbers are frightening, even today. And, less than 30% of spousal abuses are reported to the police. The statistics show that most of us likely have friends, family members and colleagues that have been, or are being abused. Understand the facts and find out how you can support a woman in need.

[Statistics about Domestic Violence in Ontario](#)



## From a Child’s Point of View

In the late 1960’s I remember seeing the bruises on her arms and legs, and the black eyes which necessitated she wear a wig and dark glasses while out in public. I didn’t really understand why she wanted to hide from the outside world—I thought it was all just a fashion statement. But at the age of 6 or 7, I had no idea that my mother was being abused. She couldn’t be! She laughed when my brother and I were around, always made sure we had clean clothes and were properly fed. My father worked out of town and only came home every 2 weeks for a few days. I was usually outside playing when not in school and just assumed my parents were inside drinking coffee and doing what other normal parents do, right? It was a long time before I realized there had been a very good reason for the disguise. After my mother took my brother and I and moved us all into a tiny 2-bedroom basement apartment, it was even more confusing to me—why did we have to move? How come I don’t have my own room anymore? I’m 8 years old now, I don’t want to have to sleep with my Mom! And what happened to our car; I don’t want to have to walk to school. My mother’s terror continued for many more years: slashed car tires, sugar poured into the gas tank, emptied bank accounts and no child support. A single mom with two little kids was looked upon harshly back then, and shelters were no where to be found. This was the early 70’s and domestic abuse was never talked about, not in our home, and not anywhere. Unfortunately, the abused becomes the abuser over time and for many years I felt like an 8-year old child when around my mother, even into my 30’s, until I eventually sought therapy. What’s my point? Society has made strides in bringing Abuse to the forefront of awareness, however, most people are still really uncomfortable talking about it. Don’t be! Don’t make the abused feel ashamed by sweeping this issue under the rug as if it’s all their fault. No one ever asks to be abused, and it should never be tolerated. I only wish a secure shelter like My Friend’s House existed back in the 70’s. Perhaps then domestic violence would be the exception rather than the norm in our society.

~And this is why I volunteer at My Friend’s House!

Each year My Friend’s House supports 600 women and children in our shelter and 1,500 crisis line callers. We need your help to continue to support these abused families and to put an end to violence in their lives.



**Call Day or Night**

**My Friend’s House**  
24 Hour Info/Crisis Line  
705.444.2511  
1.800.265.2511  
TTY: 705.444.5266

705.444.2586 admin  
705.444.5289 fax  
[www.myfriendshouse.ca](http://www.myfriendshouse.ca)

# My Friend's House News

## Give Them HOPE!

The holiday season is fast approaching, and we receive many calls from the Georgian Triangle Community at this time of year, wondering what they can do to help the women and children at My Friend's House.

We know that everyone has a different budget and a different idea of what appeals to another person. Sometimes, buying for your own family and friends can prove difficult, even though you've know them forever.

At My Friend's House, we never know in advance the women and children which may be residing here over the holidays. Their situations can change from one week, one day and one minute to the next.

Their individual needs vary significantly. How do you buy for friends you haven't met yet? Luckily, the answer is very simple - buy them hope.

**Hope that our programs and services keep running:** Our government funding shortfall for this year is estimated to be \$200,000 - money that we must raise through donations and fundraising efforts. For this reason, your support is critical to our ability to keep our doors open. Donations by credit card can be made online or over the phone and will used to keep our 4 major offerings running:

- 24 hour Confidential Crisis Phone Line
- 24 hour Emergency Shelter
- Outreach Counselling providing individual and group counselling
- Transition Counselling services providing help in locating and securing safe and affordable housing, financial assistance, and advocacy support in the legal system

**Hope for necessities of life:** We also have many basic items on our Wish List (click Brochure & Wish List online) which can be dropped off at the shelter. These items include transportation cards, gift cards, grocery certificates and basic personal hygiene items and small "luxuries" such as journals and hair salon certificates.

**Hope for their children:** My Friend's House offers one on one counselling for children affected by violence. Toys can be an important part of communication, learning and fun and therefore, we are partnering with Discovery Toys. Discovery Toys provides high quality learning toys and games for children of all ages, from newborn to adult. Layers of learning in each toy will keep children learning for years with well-designed open-ended play. Discovery Toys kids thrive on problem solving, creativity, ingenuity and endless hours of fun. These toys are NOT available in stores, and come with a lifetime guarantee. The Discovery Toys Wish List is also online and we invite you to sponsor a specific toy. They will be well used, and well loved – all season long.

## Past and Future Events—Join Us For The Fun!

My Friend's House was the recipient of several Third Party Fundraisers, such as the highly successful Ladies Home Hardware Event hosted by Tracey and Brian on November 10. Almost 500 women attended. As they emptied the Home Hardware shelves, they replenished the shelves of My Friend's House with food and life necessities. It was incredible to witness the power of women helping women.

And, not to be outdone, the spectacle of men helping women, was also on full display, in stylish red pumps and heels! A Heart-felt "Thank you" to all the good men who donned red high heels for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event October 3<sup>rd</sup>. A special congratulations goes to "Burger Bob" as the top fundraiser this year.

Date	Event/Location	Donations to MFH from:
Nov. 20, 2015	Improv Night @ The Casbah	Proceeds from ticket sales
Nov. 21, 2015	Hawkey Workman—Avening Hall, Creemore	Socks
Nov. 27-29, 2015	Blue Mountain Craft Show	Coat-check proceeds
Nov. 28, 2015	Creemore—Royal Lepage Holiday House Tour	Tour event proceeds
Dec. 11, 2015	A Collingwood Christmas Carol—Trinity United Church	Portion of proceeds from event

### SAVE THE DATE IN 2016!

6 hours of Gibraltar—July 9, 2016

Walk A Mile in Her Shoes 2016—October 1, 2016

### 2015-2016 Board of Directors

Elaine Burns, Chair • Kimberley McNabb, Past Chair • Suzanne McLean, Vice Chair • Susan Brindisi, Secretary/Treasurer • Eric Sutton, Governance • Deidre Morris, Communications & Marketing • Ursula Abbott • Sandy Bresolin • Stacie Smith • Dennis Butcher • Matt McLean • Alyson Butler



The annual Royal Lepage Holiday House Tour was another example of how lucky we are to benefit from the hard work of corporate initiatives. It's impossible to thank all the designers, suppliers, home owners, volunteers, vendors, home improvement experts and silent auction donors, individually. Perhaps it is enough to say, to all those who support My Friend's House: "We are so grateful to have Friends like you, in our corner."