

Red Door

FAMILY SHELTER

Shelter News

In This Issue

Message From the ED	PG 1
Transforming Lives	PG 1
Employee Feature	PG 2
The "Uniti" Collection	PG 3
Family Fun	PG 4

Fall / Winter 2009

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you so much for your on-going support of our work at the Red Door. As the holiday season approaches, our thoughts turn to celebrating our love for others, the importance of giving, and the true pleasure and delight that it brings to us all.

This year, at the Red Door, we have a wonderful way for you to continue to celebrate the joys of giving. Through your support of our Family Sponsorship and Holiday Giving program, families who have left the shelter and are working hard to survive on very little will feel secure in having gifts for their children and necessities for their daily lives.

Often, when a family moves out of our shelter, over 70% of their income is directed towards housing, leaving them with very little to cover their basic needs. On a daily basis, many families must choose between paying the rent or feeding their children. That's why we started our Family Sponsorship program, so we can continue to help our families when they leave the shelter.

It is a simple and flexible program. We work with each family to develop a list of the most critical items they need but can't afford to purchase. It might be a single mom not able to provide gifts for her children or a family in need of some basic items for their home. Their requests are then made available to donors like you who open their hearts and contribute by purchasing the items, or by donating funds so the Red Door can meet their needs.

Last year, with your support, we were able to help over 150 families in need. We do our best to keep up with our family's requests for assistance but every year, the demand for the program grows. It is the support from donors like you that help our families get through these difficult times.

While you're in the spirit of giving this holiday season, please consider sponsoring one of our families. I have seen the impact of our Family Sponsorship program first hand and it is amazing. We have seen many smiles and tears of joy when our families realize the level of caring and support that exists within our community. The delight they feel knowing someone cares about them is tremendous.

This year, as you contemplate how to celebrate the holiday season, consider participating in the Family Sponsorship and Holiday Giving program and helping a family in need enjoy the holidays. To learn more about our program please visit our website www.reddoorshelter.ca or contact Joyce Hsu at 416-915-5671 ext. 234.

From all of us here at the Red Door, we hope you have a safe and happy Holiday Season and we thank you for your continued support.



Sincerely,

Bernnitta Hawkins

Transforming Lives

"I came to the Red Door Family Shelter with my two young children fleeing from years of abuse."

Looking back, I'm not sure how or when the abuse began. It may have been the daily insults from my husband, or the conflicts he created, but I began to feel isolated from my friends and family. One day his anger became more than just words and I realized I was living a life that no longer was my own.

"The Red Door was a place to heal and find new hope for me and my children."

It felt like no time had gone by and we began to heal and were ready to start again. When we were getting ready to move out of the shelter, I met my Outreach Worker.

She continued to help us after we left the shelter; getting us settled and connected to our new community.

In addition to moving into our new apartment, I had also started a new job. I had a new sense of independence and confidence that I hadn't felt in many years.

My Outreach Worker made all the difference to us while we were getting used to our new surroundings.

She provided us with food and food vouchers, small things for around the apartment, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, new clothes and toys for the kids... so many things that we needed. She also spoke with my new employer to make sure that my job was not in jeopardy when I had to take time to appear in court.

Looking back now, it's hard to recognize the dark place we were in before the Red Door.

"We have come so far and finally feel safe and happy and we realize that there is a real future in front of us."

Community in Focus

During this holiday season, we at the Red Door are blessed with great supporters and volunteer initiatives, including a resident dinner program by Casey's restaurant.

For the past ten years, Casey's has been providing our families with a traditional holiday dinner and toys for all of the children staying in the shelter.

In addition, the staff also fundraise to provide funds for the Red Door's programs. Their support is invaluable to us.

The program started ten years ago when Casey's employees were encouraged to give back to their community. Michelle Adams, who was the general manager at Casey's on Front Street in Toronto, states that they searched for charities in their area to support and found the Red Door, which was a good match.

She says that *"There are a lot of families that are facing a housing crisis and fleeing abuse in the home and we wanted to do our part to make the holidays special."*

So every year at the holiday season, Casey's gather staff and people from head office to volunteer to hold a holiday party.

For Casey's it's a great community and team building experience as well, as Michelle notes, *"it's rewarding to put a smile on someone's face."*

This year our residents are looking forward to the dinner; an opportunity for great food and great friendships to be made. Every year, over 100 Red Door residents participate in this great event.

It is community initiatives like this that continue to help the Red Door fulfill its mission.

We thank Casey's and all of the other volunteers this year and wish everyone a safe holiday season.



Employee Feature



It takes many passionate and dedicated individuals who work hard every day to make Red Door a success. Annette Huggins is one of them.

Annette has been with Red Door for over thirteen years, first as a Student Placement, then as a Frontline Worker, and currently as an Outreach Worker.

As an Outreach Worker, Annette helps clients settle into their new homes and communities once they have left the shelter. She also helps them achieve their goals, whatever they may be, and is there for them when they need her. Her door is always open and she is always ready to help in any way that she can, and that is what matters most.

Having the opportunity to do this kind of work alongside an amazing team of people only makes it more enjoyable for her. She credits her colleagues with giving her a tremendous amount of support, and says that the best part about working with such a wonderful group of people is that they all have a chance to draw on each others' strengths.

For Annette, the most rewarding part of her job is seeing clients as they achieve their goals and move forward in life. She recounted a story of a woman from Albania who arrived to Canada with two sons and limited English skills. Annette was there for this family during their adjustment period in Canada. She encouraged the woman to enroll in school so that she could improve her English and be able to look for a job in her own field.

The continuous support that Annette provided was what helped this woman and her family fulfill their dreams. After much hard work, the woman was not only able to secure a job in her field, but she was also able to send her sons to university. Annette is happiest when clients come to share these kinds of news with her.

Annette says **"to me, my clients are like my own family"**. This says a lot about how she feels about her work, and also how she approaches it.

Thank you Annette for brining your passion and dedication to the Red Door every day, and for making a difference in our clients' lives for so many years!



"Charm" Pendant and Chain
By Meghan Lynn Schnarr in collaboration with
Gordon and Leah Pinsent

Canadian Celebs Rally for the Red Door

The Red Door Family Shelter has partnered with 18Karat Goldsmiths to create the inspired Uniti collection: an exciting and unique online charity auction, with all of the proceeds raised benefitting the Red Door.

The Collection has united Canadian celebrities and the Toronto arts and design communities in support of families who are experiencing a housing crises or escaping abuse.

Each celebrity has been partnered with a local designer, and has collaborated to create a one of a kind, piece of jewellery, that aesthetically expresses the meaning of home, family and community.

"Family homelessness and domestic violence is a cause that resonates among all," explained Dino Giannetti, master goldsmith and co-owner of 18Karat. "Creating the Uniti Collection and collaborating with so many artists in support of the Red Door Family Shelter has been a wonderful experience, and an opportunity for us all to give to the community in a unique way."

Celebrities rallying their time and inspiration to developing the Uniti Collection include:

- Alexandra Weston and the Weston Family, fashion icons
- World Figure Skating Champion, Elvis Stojko
- Actors Gordon and Leah Pinsent
- Breakfast Television hosts Dina Pugliese and Jennifer Valentyne
- Singer-songwriter Justin Hines
- Jonas Chernick and Athena Karkanis, stars of CBC TV's The Border
- Country music star Aaron Pritchett
- Deglassi: The Next Generation stars Raymond Ablack and Paula Brancati

Each piece is very unique and has a story to tell. The jewellery was co-created by the following designers: Meghan Schnarr; Amy Kovach; Kim Drosdick; Samatha Hawkes; Dino Giannetti; Therese Cruz; Vanessa Laurin; Darlene Martin; Suzanne Crudden; Alisha Boyd; Jenny Bird; and Shelly Purdy.

Breakfast Television host Dina Pugliese, shared that her piece represents *"the love, safety, comfort and joy that home and family bring to our lives."*

We can so easily take for granted all of life's blessings... but if we pause for a moment and truly imagine the fear, uncertainty and helplessness that these families face every single day...the call to action is clear, present and great.

I love the idea that a very generous and selfless person will walk away with a beautiful and sentimental reminder of how they made a difference, that they can wear and treasure forever."

The Uniti Collection will be available for bidding online through Waddington's from **November 12th to November 26th.**

To preview any of the jewellery or place your bid, visit **www.uniti.ca** - or see the pieces in person at 18Karat Goldsmiths at 275 Dundas Street West, Toronto.

Be sure to check out the collection, because ***every dollar raised will have a direct impact on the lives of hundreds of families in crisis!***



18Karat Goldsmiths - From Left to Right:
Vanessa Laurin, Dino Giannetti, Massimo Giannetti and
Meredith Robb



Dina Pugliese - Host of Breakfast Television



Why Hibernate when you can Celebrate!

Family Fun

Family and community are core values celebrated by the Red Door. With these values in mind, here are some fun and free or low cost activities for you and your family to enjoy around the city this winter.

Kidzfest -- Nov. 28th and 29th, 2009 -- A weekend of free and fun entertainment for all children at Yonge and Dundas Square with appearances by Dora the Explorer, Diego, Go, Max and Ruby, SpongeBob SquarePants and Harry and His Bucket Full of Dinosaurs!
www.wintermagic.ca/kidzfest

The Cavalcade of Lights Festival -- November 28th to December 31st, 2009 -- Fireworks, free concerts and skating parties at Nathan Philips Square Saturday nights in December starting at 7:00 p.m.

Winterfest -- January 29th to February 11th, 2010 -- enjoy a city-wide celebration of culture, creativity and cuisine, including free outdoor and indoor entertainment each festival weekend at Nathan Philips Square, with concerts, street theatre and the RBC WinterCity Lodge.
www.toronto.ca/special_events/wintercity/

Ice Skating -- A great winter pastime whether it's an afternoon of leisure skating with the family or an evening of pick-up hockey with good friends. Toronto has a host of neighbourhood indoor and outdoor rinks with public skating times most evenings and weekend afternoons.

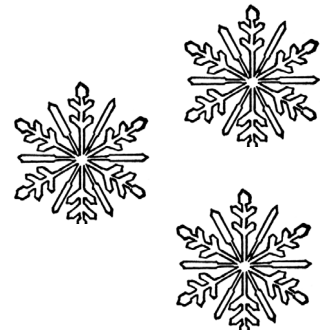
For a complete listing of locations and times visit www.toronto.ca/parks

EMOH	○	—	—	—	—
LIAMYF	—	○	—	—	—
ENSPRETS	○	—	—	—	—
TRYAP	○	—	—	○	—
OHYLL	○	○	○	—	—
LEICIC	○	—	—	—	—
REBMECDE	○	—	—	—	—
CYDAN - CNEA	—	○	—	○	—
SFLAEWONK	○	—	○	—	—
CAFRS	—	—	○	—	—
OMRNATEN	○	—	—	○	—
NERIDERE	○	○	—	○	—
RAIONTECOD	○	—	○	—	○
NTWIER	—	—	—	○	—



Winter Wonderland Word Scramble

Unscramble the words to
decode the secret message
using the circled letters



Secret Message

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