



# Community In Action

You're changing lives

WINTER 2019



## THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE HOLIDAYS BRIGHT

It's tough to imagine how difficult it is to be a parent living in a shelter with your children, especially over the holiday season, but thanks to you and many generous donors like you, families at the Red Door were given so much kind support from the community. It truly touched their hearts and made the holiday season a time of joy and love.

We received so many amazing gifts, toys, winter clothes, and gift cards, from kind people like you that were all given directly to families at our shelter, and to former residents in need at our holiday gift day.

As you will hear from Mary on page 3, many former residents tell us just how important it is to feel remembered and cared about during the holiday season. For many, that feeling of being loved by strangers is something that helps them through one of the most difficult times in their lives.

For the mother who received winter coats and clothing for her family, and the child whose face lit up when they received that special toy - your generosity at the holiday season changed lives and will be remembered always.

With your kind support, you helped make the true spirit of the season come to life. Thank you so much for making the holidays bright for families in crisis.



Families were overjoyed to receive your many generous gifts at our holiday party and gift day.

We are looking forward to another year of hope and change, and to working together with our community and people like you to transform lives and build bright futures by ending family homelessness, one family at a time.

### Learn more...

See your impact in our online Holiday Album

➔ [reddoorshelter.ca/newsletter/holiday-album](http://reddoorshelter.ca/newsletter/holiday-album)

## HOW YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE



**393** people supported over the holiday season



Hundreds of toys, winter clothes, housewares, toiletries and gift cards for families.



**257** children and teens



**136** adults



Holiday parties for families in our shelters, and for past residents.



Fun outings for kids and moms over the break.



Special holiday meals, and over 7,000 lbs of food distributed

**\$385,000**

donated in December to fund key support programs for families.



Counselling and support



Children's Programs



Moving Program



Advocacy



Finding Affordable Housing



Food Bank

## YOUR GIFTS MADE THE HOLIDAY SEASON BRIGHT!



We received hundreds of toys, gifts, winter wear, cosmetics, housewares and more from many generous people like you!



*"These gifts mean a lot. It feels good to know that there are people out there who care."*  
- Former residents



*"I feel really happy and relieved. It keeps me hopeful. This is very uplifting."* - Mother of 2

## FINDING HOPE, GIVING BACK - Mary shares her story with you

*Mary\* a former resident of the shelter who made a gift this holiday season, shares with you the support she received, how it changed her life, and why she is giving back.*

"I was living in an abusive relationship in another province. After many brutal assaults by my partner, I packed up in the night and ran away, abandoning everything that was my life at the time.

Staying with friends far away in Toronto, I thought I would be safe. But one day as I was walking to the store across the street from my friend's place, there he was; he had tracked me down. I panicked and fled. My friend helped me to search for an emergency shelter. We found space available at the Red Door.

It was frightening when I first arrived at the shelter. I had no idea what to expect, but I knew it had to be safer than running from him on the street!

The first night, I met my roommates and heard that every single woman had a similar story of terror and abuse. I was no longer alone.

I did not have to worry about the most basic things one needs to survive, so I was able to focus my attention on helping myself, and those around me. During my stay one of the women went into labour. I went with her to the hospital so she was not alone, and was in the room with her as she gave birth to her first baby. When I was sick, one of my roommates made me hot tea with lemon every morning. The women were so amazing, and the bonds were very important. I still think about them to this day.

I remember when the holiday season came around I was feeling so depressed and guilty, having left my loved ones so far away. But it ended up being one of the most touching holidays for me. Every woman and child in the shelter got a little gift. Most of the kids got a small toy or

two, and women got hygiene and a few cute little items to bring a smile. We were not forgotten or looked down upon. We were lifted up by the shelter, each other, and by the donors that helped us to all feel like we mattered. Someone out there cared enough to give us something for Christmas. To this day, I still talk about it. It was incredibly touching after years of abuse and misery. We finally were humans who were loved.

Years later, I am living in a loving marriage. I have a good job. We have pets and a lovely home that I feel safe in. I volunteer to help make the lives of those who are suffering a bit brighter. I have a grown adult son who is out on his own in the world now. I am my own person. I am strong.

The Red Door changed my life by being a safe space while I collected myself and got the support I needed. I have since helped several people get out of abusive relationships – and I know first-hand what helps women in an abusive home trying to escape. It's made me think about who I donate to, and why. It's given me the ability to see how just feeling safe, loved, and accepted can open up your entire world once the fear falls away.

I give back as a donor because your shelter saved me, and every other woman and child that was there. I give back because I know the terror, pain, and desperation that is in the hearts of these women and children as they quite literally run for their lives in a world where most people turn a blind eye. Because I want every woman and child in an abusive home to find your warm safety, and to feel what it is like to matter!

Please support the Red Door. It honestly saves lives and tragically, there are so many women who are desperate for any chance they can get to make their lives and their children's lives better – but that can only happen if the door stays open. Give these women and children a chance to feel safe, and loved, and to grow.

My gratitude to all who helped me in one of the toughest times in my life."

*\*Name changed to protect identity*

**"Just feeling safe, loved, and accepted can open up your entire world once the fear falls away".**



### HELPING MOMS HEAL

Your donations help over 130 single moms find safe sanctuary at the Red Door each year. Your donations fund supportive services for moms and children from counselling, legal support and childcare, to help finding work and safe, affordable housing.



Learn more: [reddoorshelter.ca/about-us](https://reddoorshelter.ca/about-us)



# FAMILY GUARDIANS ARE CHANGING LIVES ALL YEAR

Together, Family Guardians are changing lives. These special donors who give a monthly gift in ongoing support of women, children and families at the Red Door are helping to make bright futures possible.

"I give to Red Door because I believe in supporting women and families in crisis and that the place to direct that support is in my own community. I'm proud to say I live in the same neighbourhood as Red Door. I have seen the results of the incredible work that they do; women who've made their own lives better. By becoming a monthly donor, I feel like I'm a committed partner in that work."

**Candice Gregoris, Family Guardian**



## MAKE YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION TODAY

Join Candice and other dedicated Family Guardians who are making a difference each and every day!

Monthly giving helps fund critical programs throughout the year that give families the stability, strength and hope they need to heal and rebuild their lives.

**Less than \$1 a day can have a meaningful and lasting impact.**

To learn more or to join visit:  
[reddoorshelter.ca/monthly-giving](https://reddoorshelter.ca/monthly-giving)

Experiences you make possible with your support.

## HOLIDAYS MADE MAGIC FOR KIDS

Thanks to you, this holiday season there was laughter in the air and smiles all around as kids in our shelter got to enjoy many amazing activities and outings.

At our holiday party, kids received so many wonderful toys and gifts, and *loved* the entertainment. There was a foot stomping musical performance by Lenny Graf, balloon creations, face-painting, plus a surprise visit from none other than Mr. and Mrs. Claus! For moms, seeing their children's faces light up with joy as they opened their gifts was the most wonderful gift of all.

Over the break, kids and moms got to head to the movies, take in a wonderful and whimsical performance of Mary Poppins, enjoy an afternoon of skating at Nathan Phillips Square, and let's not forget about all the yummy treats and hot chocolate!

It means so much for kids and moms living in the shelter to have these positive memorable experiences. They truly last a lifetime. Thank you for making it a happy holiday!



Kids and moms took in a whimsical performance of Mary Poppins at Young People's Theatre.



Children were wowed with a special appearance by magician and illusionist Ray Chance.

Learn more about your impact:  
[reddoorshelter.ca/programs/children](https://reddoorshelter.ca/programs/children)

# CHILDREN CHANGING OUR WORLD

It was wonderful and heartwarming to see so many incredible young people taking initiative in their schools and neighbourhoods to raise awareness this holiday season and collect gifts & funds to help homeless families.

Since 2016, a group of Leslieville area girls known as the Care Gift Elves have organized a neighbourhood-wide donation drive each holiday season to collect toiletries, winter clothing, toys and goodies for families at the Red Door. The Elves canvass the neighbourhood asking local residents and businesses to lend a hand.

It's amazing to see how they bring the community together! This year they collected over 300 amazing gift bags for women and children at the Red Door, as well as supplies and pet treats for our partner Link Toronto, who provide foster care for pets of women and families seeking shelter.



The Care Gift Elves dropped off over 300 gift bags for moms and children at our shelter.



11-year-olds Grace and Fenner organized a fundraiser that involved baking and selling 100 pies, raising over \$3,000 for Red Door.

Two local elementary school students held a sweet fundraiser on Giving Tuesday to raise money for the Red Door, one pie at a time.

When 11-year-olds, Grace and Fenner learned that we were in need of a fridge at our shelter because we couldn't accept a donation of 50 subs from their school, they wanted to take action. So, they rolled up their sleeves and set to work. Their plan: bake and sell 100 pies to raise the funds we needed. Getting their friends, parents and neighbours involved, they spent a day baking in their church basement and at the end of the day they had sold 102 pies and raised a total of \$3,424!

"It just feels good that there are so many people in the community who will come out and help women and children in need, and it makes me really happy" says Grace.

Congrats to all of you young supporters who made a difference this holiday season. It is truly inspiring to know that there are so many of you in our community who are keen to step up and take action. You will change the world!



## THANK YOU!

A big thank you to all of the wonderful kids, school classes, and youth groups who collected gifts and raised funds to help families in need.



## YOUR COMMUNITY IN ACTION

This holiday season, the city was bustling with activity! Many amazing neighbourhood groups and local businesses hosted events to raise awareness and funds to support homeless families. In case you missed them, here are some of the highlights!



### DRAUGHTS AND CRAFTS

Each year, Left Field Brewery hosts a delightful holiday craft market with handmade gifts, treats and fun for the whole family, and also donate a portion of their draught sales for the month of December. This year, the team and their generous patrons raised over \$7,000 to support moms and children at our shelter.



### GINGERBREAD PARTY

Since 2012, J K Hannaford Barristers has hosted a unique holiday fundraiser where teams compete to build the most epic gingerbread house, purchasing supplies by donation to build their masterpieces. Each year they've raised over \$10,000 for programs at our shelter.



### BLUES FOR RED DOOR

Kicking off the holiday season, in November, Blues for Red Door brought together award-winning blues artists & top Canadian performers for a spectacular night of music and support for homeless families. This annual charity concert is not to be missed! We look forward to Blues for Red Door 2019!

## CATERING FOR A CAUSE

### Announcing a new partnership with Chef's Catering

Chef's Catering is a local, family-run business specializing in corporate foodservice. When customers purchase the Red Door menu for their event, office party or client meeting, Chef's Catering matches their order and donate the meals for families at the Red Door shelter.

This year, Chef's Catering aims to provide 50,000 meals for women and children seeking sanctuary from intimate partner abuse at our Violence Against Women shelter.

"When people feel safe, are cared for and well fed, it gives them a sense of dignity and it empowers them in other aspects of their life," explains Justin Siklis, President of Chef's Catering. "That's why we wanted to partner with Red Door – to help these women and kids start their new chapter on the happiest and healthiest note possible."



## Chefs Catering

To order for your next event, office party or client meeting contact Justin Siklis at 416-939-8515 or [justin.siklis@chefscatering.ca](mailto:justin.siklis@chefscatering.ca)



## REMINISCING ABOUT RED DOOR

Congo-born, Toronto-based singer/songwriter Desiire was completely floored to find himself recording music in the same building where he, his mom and siblings sought shelter when they first arrived in Canada as refugees many years ago.

The building was our old Lawrence East shelter location, which closed in 2005, and is now the location of Coalition Music Studio.

"This was the very first place I lived in after leaving Africa" recalls Desiire. "My mom, 4 siblings and I lived in a tiny room with two bunk beds for 3 months. We didn't have a place to stay, we spoke no English and didn't know anyone, so this was the only option. I was 11 last time I was here."

Walking through the building, Desiire said it was so surreal to be standing in the same rooms where he spent time watching TV, or playing with other children so many years ago.

"I used to run around the building making up my little pretend songs for fun, never thought in a MILLION years that I'd be back in the same place and doing it for real."

"Red Door has made such an impact in the outcome of my life and I am forever grateful. What you do is absolutely



Singer/songwriter Desiire on the steps of the former Red Door - Lawrence shelter location.

incredible and life changing to so many people, especially young children. THANK YOU so much for working hard to provide a safe space for families. You are truly changing lives! Eternally grateful."

Check out Desiire's unique blend of R&B, Soul and Hip Hop out now on SoundCloud: [soundcloud.com/desiirenow](https://soundcloud.com/desiirenow)  
Instagram [@desiirenow](https://www.instagram.com/desiirenow)



## A FRESH START FOR FAMILIES

Most families arrive at the shelter with very few personal belongings having been forced to leave their homes quickly in fear for their own safety.

Thanks to your support of our Moving Program and our partnership with Enercare, together we can provide home essentials for these families when they move out of the shelter.

Since 2017, Enercare's Fresh Start program has provided customized Fresh Start kits valued at \$1,000 for 20 families. Included is everything from towels to bedding, utensils, cookware and small appliances.

Enercare partners with 3 shelters in Ontario and in December, they did something extra special for the 100th Fresh Start family. Check out the video at [enercare.ca/freshstart](https://enercare.ca/freshstart)

## YOU MOVE FAMILIES FORWARD

Your support helps us operate a Moving Program which provides donated furniture, housewares and a moving truck and driver when families are ready to move out of the shelter. The program helps families settle in their new home, and for many families, it means the difference between moving into an empty apartment and a place to call *home*.

Learn more about the difference you make at:

[reddoorshelter.ca/moving-program](https://reddoorshelter.ca/moving-program)



## COFFEE WITH A GREAT PERK!

Help homeless families with every cup

We're excited about the partnership we've brewed up with Coast to Coast Coffee, Canada's Local Roaster.

Coast to Coast's Organic and Fair Trade coffees are roasted and conveniently shipped for free to your mailbox anywhere in Canada within 24 hours of roasting for peak freshness.

Choose from six Red Door coffees today including Bold, Espresso and Decaf, and \$2.00 from every package you order will be donated to Red Door Shelter to help homeless families.



Shop now at: [reddoorshelter.ca/red-door-coffee](http://reddoorshelter.ca/red-door-coffee)



### A TOUCHING GIFT ♥

These adorable twin brothers saved up all of their allowance money for the entire year and decided together to donate all \$400 to help homeless families and children at the Red Door. So sweet! Thank you boys!

## WE WANT TO KNOW!

It is important to us that you are happy with the way we are communicating with you about the impact of your support and how you can continue to make a difference.

Please contact us at any time and let us know your communication preferences. We currently use email, phone and mail to stay in touch. We only mail donation appeals twice a year.

Contact us at:

[fundraising@reddoorshelter.ca](mailto:fundraising@reddoorshelter.ca)  
416-915-5671 x225

Or go online at:

[reddoorshelter.ca/change-contact](http://reddoorshelter.ca/change-contact)



### DONATE

\$1 a day can  
change lives



### VOLUNTEER

join our team  
to help



### CONNECT

join our online  
community



### SHARE

share your stories  
and feedback



**Red Door**  
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