

Community In Action

You're changing lives



Fall 2021

Changing tomorrow, today. Anna speaks out.

When Anna was eight years old, she, her little sister and her mom fled their home, leaving everything they had behind. Clothes, toys, friends, and financial security.

"Home" was not the safe haven it should be – it was a violent nightmare filled with rage. All they knew was physical and emotional abuse.

Anna's mom found the Red Door and the family had a sanctuary, free of fear, threats and trauma.

"For the first time in my life, I felt safe and secure. To know there is a safe haven like the Red Door is something I'll always be grateful for."

It takes strength and courage to leave an abusive environment, but the stigma associated with seeking safety at a shelter is not easy to overcome. Anna still lives with feelings of shame and unworthiness.

But at the Red Door, the family met other women who shared their experience, who understood their pain and their fear because they had taken a similar path on their way to a new life. Anna got to know the kids and families staying at the shelter and they became mentors and friends.

"There was a woman at the shelter who was like a grandmother to me. She taught me how to cook things like fried rice and scrambled eggs. She cared about me."

A new beginning was possible for Anna and her family, thanks to the compassion of people like you.



Thirty-eight years later Anna still remembers her life before the Red Door. As she watches her daughter grow into a happy, secure and confident young woman, she is thankful her child's life is different to the one she experienced.

"There is a future now," Anna says. Had it not been for the Red Door community, we would be in a different situation today. We're in a good place now. My mother just got her black belt in taekwondo at 68 years old! My sisters and I see each other every weekend. My children are growing up in a completely different world from the one I lived in."

Anna knows what it means to be a lost and frightened little girl. So, she is holding out a hand to the women and girls who need our support and ran in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon and raised \$1,200 for the Red Door!

continued on page 2

Stocking the shelves of Ray's Cupboard



Does the name Reverend Ray McCleary sound familiar? In 1936, Reverend McCleary arrived in the Leslieville neighbourhood as the new minister of the WoodGreen United Church. The crowded neighbourhood had been hit particularly hard by

the Great Depression and Reverend McCleary made it his mission to improve the lives of the poorest, most vulnerable people in his parish.

To David McCleary and Nancy Waxl, he was Uncle Ray, and the inspiration behind Ray's Cupboard, an initiative to keep the shelves of the Red Door's food bank stocked with nutritious and delicious food for our residents.

"It's amazing to be able to continue our uncle's legacy," Nancy says. "It's an ongoing effort but we're helping continue his dream of the Red Door."

With the support of family, friends and the community, the fundraiser is shy of the siblings' \$10,000 goal but David and Nancy are hoping to continue building awareness of the food bank.

"Uncle Ray was a wonderful man," David says. "He was positive all the time and earned the trust of his community. He would go around asking for neighbours' help and no one could say no because he had the respect of the neighbourhood."

Reverend McCleary was committed to supporting the people in his community who needed a helping hand most. His family is committed to ensuring his legacy lives on by supporting the Red Door through Ray's Cupboard.

You can create positive change in honour of Ray McCleary by going to reddoorshelter.ca/rays-cupboard and donating to keep Ray's Cupboard full.

continued from page 1

When families like Anna's have nowhere else to turn, they find sanctuary and support at the Red Door: moms fleeing abuse to keep their children safe; refugees running from violence and war; and families in crisis desperate for help.

Your generous donations fund key programs and services. Your support has a lasting impact on the families at the Red Door.

Help families in similar situations to Anna's with your special holiday gift:
reddoorshelter.ca/gifts-to-empower

**The Constantine
Yorkville Run
and Scotiabank
Toronto Waterfront
Marathon raised**



\$11,034 for the
Red Door!



Together, We're Changing Tomorrow, Today

Our 2021 Annual Report celebrates courage in the face of adversity and honours the circle of support that is changing tomorrow, today. Your generous donations fund key programs and services, and your volunteer time offers families care and compassion. We couldn't support families fleeing violence and experiencing homelessness without your support.

Read the report here:
reddoorshelter.ca/publications

Making her (book)mark

Meet Willow Gould, a remarkable 11-year-old who discovered the bookmarks she made to encourage her to read – her dyslexia makes reading difficult – could help change tomorrow, today.

When the pandemic surged and the world seemed to stop, Willow noticed how hard people were struggling.

"My whole life, I've been concerned about homelessness. I thought of the families at the Red Door and I wanted to help. I wanted to make a difference."

So instead of sitting around in her room, Willow grabbed her markers, ramped up her creativity and 101 Bookmarks was born. She poured her heart into every beautiful design, adding tassels and beads for extra impact. She asked friends, family and the community to consider purchasing one – or more – with proceeds going to support the Red Door and the families we serve.

With the end of 2021 soon coming to an end, Willow has raised \$1,035 for the Red Door and she feels pretty good about that.

"Everyone thinks it's so cool that I have a business and a goal – that I stuck with it. I'm happy to be helping so many people."

What's next for 101 Bookmarks?

"Maybe 101 Bookmarks will grow into a bigger business," Willow muses. Who knows, maybe in the next few years I'll be making new products."

Check out Willow on Instagram and follow along to see the beautiful creations she makes **@101bookmarks**

To create your own fundraiser for the Red Door visit:
reddoorshelter.ca/champions



Our Journey Home

It's been a long and eventful seven-year journey. Thanks to our circle of support, we opened the doors of our new family shelter.

On June 17, 2021, with the help of Mayor John Tory and Councillor Paula Fletcher (Toronto-Danforth), we virtually cut the ribbon on the new and purpose-built Red Door Family Shelter.

The innovative family shelter on Booth Avenue is the first of its kind, occupying four floors of a new private condo development in Leslieville. Home to the original Red Door Shelter at WoodGreen United Church, the new facility holds 106 beds and cribs, and can accommodate all the much-needed programs and services we offer to support our residents.

It feels so good to be home! We can't thank everyone enough for walking alongside us as we transitioned into our new family shelter. Our staff, community members and dedicated supporters have been the backbone of who we are and for that we are eternally grateful. Thank you for welcoming our return to Leslieville with open arms.

We invite you to tour the inside of our family shelter by visiting: **reddoorshelter.ca/welcome-home-video**

Local Love shines brightly this holiday

Gratitude. We feel grateful to work with such incredible local businesses that make our community stronger and better! For almost two years now our world has been turned upside down. Despite the many challenges, local businesses continue to prioritize support to families who come to the Red Door. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and please consider supporting #localbusinesses this holiday.



Left Field Brewery > leftfieldbrewery.ca

For the seventh year, Left Field Brewery is supporting the Red Door with a variety of fundraising initiatives this holiday season. For every 12oz pour from the Tap Room and every Red Door Mixed 6 Pack that's sold in-store and online between November 26th to December 31st, \$1 will be donated to the Red Door.

Fruitful Market

> 327 Carlaw Avenue just south of Dundas

Looking for some delicious meals and treats while supporting a good cause? From November 29 – December 23, Fruitful Market is launching gift baskets in support of the Red Door. Every purchase of a beautiful gift basket, Fruitful Market will donate \$5 and \$1 for every already prepared frozen meal and holiday themed cookie sold.

On the Off Beat Music School

> ontheoffbeat.ca/music-books

As part of Leslieville's Wanderlust event from November 22 – December 18, On the Off Beat Music School will be donating \$10 to the Red Door for every \$30 or more purchase of music books. Customers will also receive a beautiful handmade bag with their purchase.

Pilot Coffee > pilotcoffeeroasters.com

Pilot Coffee is in the giving spirit! \$1 from every 340g bag of their special Holiday blend will be donated to the Red Door Family Shelter to help support families, refugees, women and children in need. Thank you for your 12 years of dedicated support!

Chefs Catering > chefscatering.ca/mrgoodmeats

Throughout the holiday season you can order deliciously prepared meals (delivered to your home anywhere in the GTA) and Chefs Catering will donate 2 meals to the Red Door for every meal purchased!

Foxy Originals > foxyoriginals.com

Made locally in Scarborough, funds raised from these beautiful 'Give Back' necklaces will help support the women and families of the Red Door. With 20 per cent of proceeds from retail sales and 10 per cent from wholesale sales of the necklaces to be donated to the Red Door.

Leslieville Flea – Holiday Market

> leslievilleflea.com/markets

On December 11 and 12 come out to the Jimmie Simpson Rec Centre on 870 Queen St. East to support the annual Leslieville Flea with their Holiday Market. Participate in their toy drive and fundraiser to help the families of the Red Door this holiday season.

SATY + PRATHA > newdayproject.ca

New Day is a creative project started by photographers, Pratha Samyrajah and Saty Namvar in support of the Red Door. This year, the duo has decided to partner with the Red Door for a second year with proceeds from their beautiful calendar supporting families in need!