

# Red Door Family Shelter

## 2007 Annual Report

### Board of Directors 2006-2007

Andrew Hussain - *President*  
Graeme Harris - *Vice President*  
Rod Major - *Treasurer*  
Laurel Service - *Secretary*  
Roger Silverthorne                      Indira Sinton  
Rachel Aber-Schlesinger                Louise McInnes  
Marlene Gibbs                              Christine Mapp  
Denise Gordon-Mohamud                John McInnes

### Message from the President & Executive Director

It is the mission of the Red Door to provide safe and supportive emergency housing to individuals and families in need of refuge from domestic violence and to those who find themselves without accommodation. The Red Door assists residents in their efforts to establish a stable life outside the shelter through education, counselling, community services and advocacy on their behalf.

Our focus over the last year was on strengthening the foundation upon which the Red Door is built so that we can continue to improve the quality of support services provided to families and individuals who come through our doors. We are pleased to report here on our top three accomplishments:

First, our 50-bed shelter for abused women was relocated to a safer, more secure location with a large backyard in which the children can play. It is situated in a residential neighbourhood with easy access to public transit. The new location has enabled us to provide a more supportive environment as mothers and their children heal from the abuse they have suffered.

The past year also saw the completion of our efforts to bring Red Door's Family Shelter operations into compliance with the City of Toronto's new Shelter Standards. These new standards were developed to ensure that homeless people receive the services they need to end their episode of homelessness in a dignified and respectful manner.

One of those standards, the space standard, had a dramatic impact on our operations. It requires that each client in a shelter be provided with a minimum sleeping area of 3.5 square meters (or 38 square feet) with 75 centimeters (or

2.5 feet) between each bed. That particular standard, combined with the reality of the City's variable funding formula, meant that one of our shelters was no longer financially viable and in the fall of 2006 we closed that location.

This very difficult restructuring process was completed last year. We are now operating 120 beds at our Family Shelter location, down from the previous 195 beds over three sites and we have a Family Shelter that is fully compliant with the new space standards.

Finally, near the end of the fiscal year, we were successful in securing a large capital grant from the Ministry of Community and Social Services allowing us to significantly improve some critical components of the physical infrastructure at our abused women's shelter. The shelter has been closed temporarily while we undertake the renovations.

In the coming year, we will continue to build on the foundation laid this past year. We will be working on developing and delivering more dynamic and creative programming for the families who come through our doors. We will also be focused on completing the renovations to our shelter for abused women and their children.

In closing we want to thank our staff, volunteers and donors who have made it possible for the Red Door to remain committed to delivering on its mission of providing the very best support services to each and every family that comes through our doors.

Many thanks to you all,

*Andrew Hussain*  
President

*Bernnitta Hawkins*  
Executive Director

## Who We Serve

### Breaking the Block of Ice

Only the sound of breathing broke the deafening silence. They spoke no words yet their pain filled eyes revealed the sad story that had been hidden for so long behind the doors of their own home. The dark circles under her eyes showed the suffering and hurt Lorna had endured for over three years. She was a skinny young woman with two little boys; 3-year-old Peter and 4-year-old Josh.

The family had come to the Red Door Shelter fleeing domestic violence with the hope of putting the shattered pieces of their life back together. Although they had the will to get their life back on track, the trauma and agony they had experienced had formed what seemed like a massive block of ice around them and they could not respond to us when we reached out to them. Lorna would drop the children off at the shelter's daycare and leave, not turning her head at the sound of their cries. She did not interact with her children nor show any signs of affection toward them. We tried to soothe the younger child, who did not speak a word and only cried in anguish. Meanwhile his older brother was hugging him protectively as they both stood with their heads turned away from us in great despair, trying to block everything out. It was a great challenge for us as well as them to melt the ice formed within them from years of violence and pain.

4-year-old Josh was eventually enrolled in kindergarten and a school liaison worker from the shelter worked closely with him. He slowly learned the alphabet and how to draw a house with the sun shining from above. But above all, he learned how to

*"For me you are the world. You gave me the strength to look within and find a strong woman with the will to live. You gave me hope and were there for me when it seemed like the world had turned its back, Thank you."*

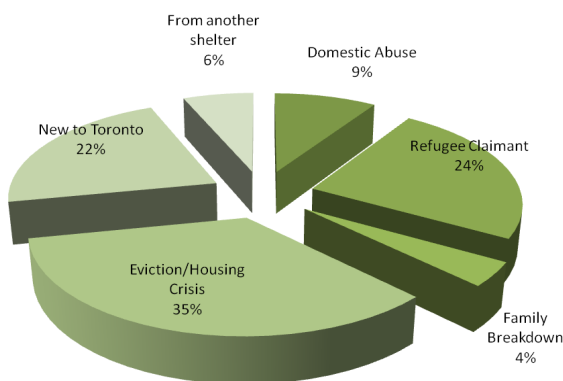
smile. Peter, following his brother's lead, was responding to the shelter staff's affection. He was learning to be just a kid; talking, laughing, playing, trusting again.

One day as Lorna was dropping her boys off, she bent down and held them both tightly in her arms. She had become the most sensitive, affectionate and loving mother one could possibly imagine. For the first time we saw her beautiful smile, and a spark in her shining eyes that had been missing up until then. They were different people. They were people with new hope acquired through Red Door's help and perseverance as well as their own determination to melt the block of ice that had surrounded their hearts for so long.

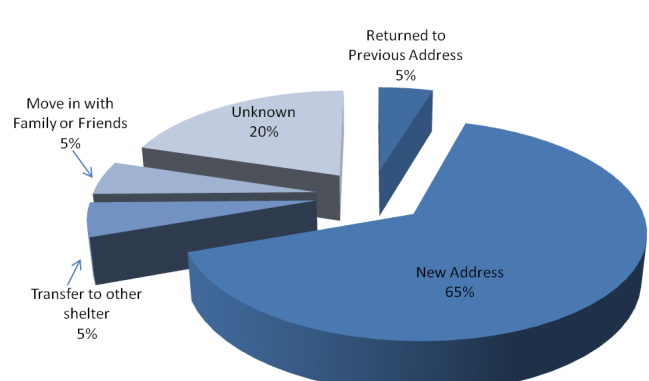
Today Lorna and her two little boys live on their own. Lorna is working and the children are involved in a subsidized daycare. They have put the past behind them, as their wounds continue to heal. They regularly call us or visit, each time sending a thank you letter and expressing their gratitude for the help they received at the Red Door. The young mother once said to us "For me you are the world. You gave me the strength to look within and find a strong woman with the will to live. You gave me hope, and were there for me when it seemed like the world had turned its back. Thank you."

## Facts & Figures

From April 2006 to March 2007, the Red Door served 648 individuals making up 254 families. 62% of residents were children. Due to restructuring efforts, the shelter was open to new intakes for only 9 months making the number served lower than in previous years.



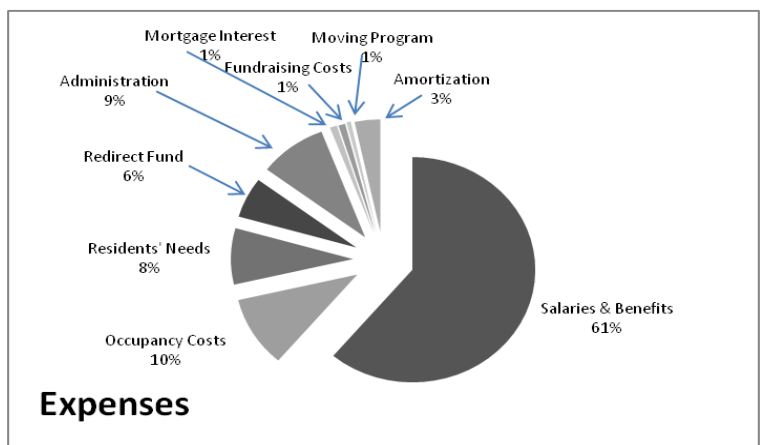
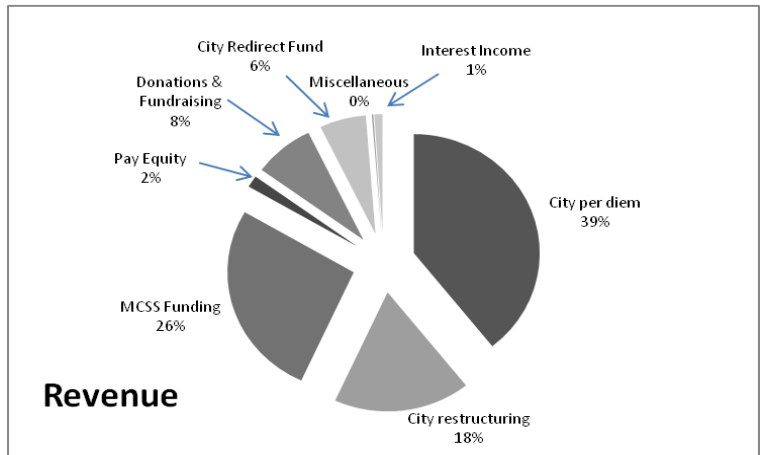
Reason for Coming to Shelter



Reason for Leaving

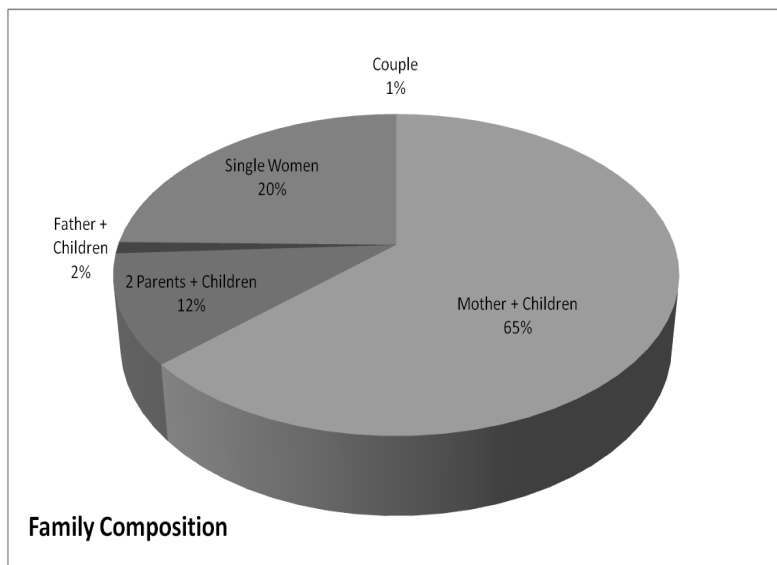
**Revenues & Expenses  
for the Year Ended March 31, 2007**

Revenues	2007
City of Toronto per diem	\$2,021,527
City of Toronto restructuring	903,565
MCSS Funding	1,365,965
Pay Equity	82,080
Donations & Fundraising	401,691
City of Toronto Redirect Fund	306,856
Miscellaneous	6,570
Interest Income	54,030
Gain on disposition of capital asset	2,945
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$5,145,229</b>
Expenses	
Salaries & Benefits	3,239,649
Occupancy Costs	538,430
Residents' Needs	427,534
City of Toronto Redirect Fund	307,110
Administration	474,487
Mortgage Interest	50,203
Fundraising Costs	47,836
Moving Program	29,080
Amortization	180,133
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,294,462</b>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	(\$149,233)



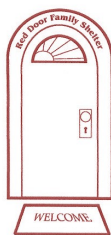
## More Facts & Figures

Families made up 80% of those served by the Red Door with the other 20% being single, abused women. Most of the families (81%) were lead by single moms and a smaller percentage (18%) were 2-parent or single-father families.



## Moving Program

The Red Door's Moving Program is unique among shelters for women fleeing abuse as well as family shelters. With the Moving Program we are able to give our families a jump-start into their new homes and lives. When a family is ready to move from the shelter we are able to move their personal belongings and to provide some of the furniture that they require by linking donated furniture with residents' needs. The operation of the Moving Program has meant that families are able to use more of their "start-up monies" for food, clothing and other necessities rather than on their move or buying furniture. During the 2006/2007 fiscal year this program served over 250 families. 96% of the families who required the services of a professional mover were able to use Red Door's Moving Program instead.



## Our Mission

*The WoodGreen Red Door Family Shelter provides safe and supportive emergency housing to individuals and families in need of refuge from domestic violence and to those who find themselves without accommodation. The Red Door assists residents in their efforts to establish a stable life outside the shelter through education, counselling, community services and advocacy on their behalf.*

## Funders

- **City of Toronto**  
Shelter, Support & Housing Administration  
Division
- **Government of Ontario**  
Ministry of Community and Social Services

## Fundraising Events

We would like to thank those who worked so diligently over the past year; donating time, energy and resources through the following fundraising events; and helping to make a difference in the lives of the families who pass through the Red Door.

- **An Evening Through the Red Door**  
♦ *Campbell Becher & Friends*
- **Open Door Music Festival**  
♦ *Marysia Czarski & Sharon Ross*
- **Bond Fountain Art Exhibit**  
♦ *Baird MacGregor Insurance Brokers*
- **Sherway Gardens Wreath Fundraiser**  
♦ *Marnie Bonnett*
- **Christmas is for Kids Toy Drive**  
♦ *Falon Webb*
- **Beaver Bible Class - Westway United Church**  
♦ *Ed Tavener & Murray Dowey*
- **Be A Kid Day**

## Donors

We greatly appreciate the donations made by individuals, businesses and other groups over the past year. Every single donation helps to end family homelessness, one family at a time.

## In Memoriam

The past year marked the loss of some of Red Door's great supporters who were remembered by many with gifts to Red Door in their memory:

- Reverend John Hilborn, founding member
- Lorna Karan
- Ilan Tsekhan

## John Hilborn

Red Door lost an important, long-time supporter with the passing of the Reverend John Hilborn in 2006. John was the minister of Woodgreen United Church in 1982 when the church founded the Red Door Shelter. He served as its first board chairman and contributed enormously to the work and the growth of the Red Door for many years right up until his death. John was well loved by residents, staff and board members alike and we are very sorry to have lost him.

## Doris Neville

A special thank you to the late Doris Neville who gave so generously to Red Door through her estate.

*..... 25 years of ending family homelessness, one family at a time.*