



# Red Door

## FAMILY SHELTER

*Ending family homelessness...  
one family at a time*



## Shelter News Summer 2012

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Once again, Team Red Door will be participating in the 2012 STWM Charity Challenge and this year **we need your help!**

On October 14th, join us for the 5K walk, half-marathon or full marathon and help raise funds for our programs that make a difference for over 500 families every year.

This year we hope to have at least 20 new participants on Team Red Door, and **hopefully you'll be one of them!**

Help us reach our goal of raising \$15,000 to support our programs!

For more information, please visit:  
[www.reddoorshelter.ca/marathon](http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/marathon)

### Anjali's Story

*Anjali came to the Red Door as a refugee claimant from India. She was a college professor with a degree in Zoology. She fled India with her daughter because she was trapped in an abusive relationship.*

Born in a very traditional family, I lead a sheltered and protected life and spent my time focused on my studies. Once in my 20's, my parents sought a husband for me as arranged marriages still remain the norm. I got married and moved to Mumbai.

The trouble started surfacing very early on. I was not allowed to go anywhere on my own. I did not have any friends and family in Mumbai, so I stayed indoors. I did not even have money to go anywhere. My husband and his mother controlled the finances completely. I could not even call my parents. I was so depressed and lonely and miserable. I could not confide in anyone.

My husband and I briefly moved to the US. We had my daughter there. Living there I was exposed to a very different culture and I learned a different way of life. Emotional abuse, control, misogyny – these were not things I had to accept. With my daughter in my life I felt new strength. I had to live for her and do everything possible to give her a better life.

But after five years in the US, my husband decided "we are going back to India". I knew what it would be like, and I feared things would turn for the worse, but my daughter was just 3 years old at the time, so if I stayed back in the US with her I would have no support, and no family. She was too young and I was not confident that I could make it on my own.

I went back with my husband as I had no choice. I was back to being the domestic servant for he and his family. The very first week, they started at me, complaining about the food, and other little things, things that I used to endure and accept, but because I had seen another way of life in North America, I couldn't just accept them anymore – I spoke back, and I defended myself. This was not acceptable to him or his mother. He would scream at me and threaten me. His mother was worse. At one point after rebuking one of her insults, she came at me with a rolling pin and started to beat me, my daughter watching from the doorway.

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For my daughter's sake, I could not bear any more of this abuse. I did not want her to witness her mother being screamed at, humiliated, beaten. I took Maya and went back to my parents but they could not support me either. They told me to go back to my husband's home, saying that I had caused them shame by returning. I felt so isolated. All I wanted was to live with dignity and integrity. He began threatening me on the phone and told me he was coming to take my daughter away. My family wouldn't help me, and neither would the authorities. My only choice was to flee the country.

I came to Canada with Maya and made a refugee claim at the airport. After getting the documents, the immigration officer gave me information about the Red Door Shelter. Red Door was my first contact in Canada.

It was such a huge blessing. I don't know what I would have done without the Red Door's help. I was lost, and needed help with everything. From helping me find an immigration lawyer, getting legal aid, connecting me with the Ontario Works, all of the resources were there. The staff was so empathetic, and were always going out of their way to help me even with the most basic things, like showing me how to use the TTC, or opening up a bank account. Never living on my own before, I felt so safe because there were other women there. I made friends with many of them.

My outreach worker helped me find an apartment near the shelter so I could stay close and connected, and they helped me with moving and provided some very good furniture for me. They helped Maya integrate with her new school and provided her with school supplies. We were invited to the Christmas party which was so meaningful because we would have been all alone in a new country with no friends or family during the festive season.

Much to my worst fears, in April 2011 my refugee claim was denied. With no money to pay the lawyers and no legal aid, it was only a matter of time before I would be removed from the country. It was like being diagnosed with cancer and being told I had six months to live. The uncertainty was awful to bear. I was connected with the Barbara Schilfer Clinic, who began working on my case. All the while I was preparing for the inevitable – being deported.

But in January 2012, I finally received the decision that my claim had been accepted. I was so overwhelmed with gratitude. It was like a miracle. After all that I've been through, I know that I am now safe, and I can really start a new life in Canada. Since then I have been volunteering with a social service agency in my area, because I want to give back some of the help that I received. I hope to pursue a new career in social services so that I can continue to make a difference in the lives of other women like me.

*Anjali*

*When Anjali told us she was interested in gaining more experience in the social service sector we connected her to a volunteer opportunity at our shelter. She is now volunteering with our Outreach department helping support newcomers through their immigration process and housing search. We are so glad to have her as part of our team, and to be able to help her reach her new goal.*

## Toronto Welcomes 'Macaron Day'

Sweet treats abounded on Toronto's inaugural 'Macaron Day' (March 20th) when 18 of the city's finest patisseries featured the colourful meringue-based confections as part of a delicious benefit for the Red Door. Orchestrated by Michel Firanski of Patisserie La Bamboche, each location offered 1 free macaron, with 25% of additional sales donated to the Red Door. At the end of the day, they raised a combined \$6,640. Amazing work from all involved! We're looking forward to next year.

**Thinking about holding your own event to help raise funds and awareness for the Red Door? We have lots of great tips and ideas to get you started! Visit:**

**[www.reddoorshelter.ca/special-events](http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/special-events)**



Owner Michel Firanski and Chef Stephen Nason

# Special Thanks for our new PSA Commercials

A tremendous thank you to all of the many hands that helped create two incredible video Public Service Announcement (PSA) commercials for us. More than 75 talented people were involved, and from start to finish donated all of their time and creative energy to make it happen – pro bono! Their combined efforts amounted to a donated value of over \$400,000!! – a cost we could never afford without the generosity of the many people who put it all together:



## Wanted! Sound & Picture

Bob Johnston  
Ramona Gorick-Lee  
Earl Torno  
Shawn French  
John deNottbeck

## Sharpe Blackmore Euro RSCG

Paul McClimond  
Stephanie Bowen  
Sanna Kula  
Jamie Spears  
Rick Kang  
Marguerite Wallace  
Tianne Rodrigues  
Amy Leung  
Henry Caleon  
Laura Fox  
Michelle Taylor

## Code Film

Thomas Rickert  
Marc Andre Debruyne  
Samy Inayeh  
Erik Wilson

Magda Czyz  
Michael Bailey  
Dan White  
Rhys Brisbin  
Alex Lawrence  
Conor Macguire  
Sherlyn Torres  
Todd Mank  
Richard Pierre  
Joel Cameron  
Kanishka Gulati  
Katrina Olsen

## School Editing

Erin Kuttner  
James Marin  
Paul Binney  
Sarah Brooks  
Ryan Hunt  
Daniel Bochenski

## Alter Ego

Conor Fisher  
Jane Garrah  
Wade Odium

## Powerhouse Casting

Andrew Hayes

## Talent

Aniko Kaszas  
Khalia Brooks  
Clarke Smith  
Stanley Taylor  
Tammy Everett  
Leon Xu  
Suzanne Asner  
Aisha Hijazi  
Ursula Drayton  
Topper McGinty  
Ivan Boddy  
Katie Boddy  
Peter Boddy  
Rachel Paconi  
Keianah Madray  
JJ Noel

Thank you also to Ken Dodd,  
Coxwell Laundromat, Joe  
Sutherland Rentals, and Craig De  
Blois and Lifford Wine Agency

You can view the PSAs by visiting:  
[www.reddoorshelter.ca/change-a-life](http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/change-a-life)

**Please share them widely!**



More great news! CTV Toronto has donated airtime for the commercials on their networks! Look for our commercials airing this summer.



## Program Highlight - Photography Workshop

This past winter we introduced a new Self-Expressive Photography program led by photographer Krista Fogel, geared specifically towards youth and teens as a way to learn the basics of digital photography and explore this art as a means of self-expression. The end project was for each student to create a photographic self-portrait that expressed something about themselves. The photographs were shown at a special gala exhibit at the Ben Navaee Gallery. The students were very excited and proud to have their work displayed! We look forward to continuing the program this summer.



Budding photographers in action!

Thank you to the generous funders of the program:  
McLean Foundation, The Jackman Foundation

## Volunteer Spotlight - Parvin Khan

We wanted to shine the spotlight on one of our long standing volunteers for all the great work she does. Parvin Khan was recently awarded the Scadding Court, Investing in Our Diversity Scholarship which recognizes the commitment of young people involved in anti-racism, diversity initiatives and building healthy communities. Parvin and her mother came to the Red Door in Feb. 2009, and Parvin has been volunteering since Sept. 2009, helping sort in-kind donations to distribute to our residents, and helping us at various events. Parvin is a remarkable young lady, and outstanding volunteer. Thank you Parvin for all of your hard work, and congratulations from all of us at the Red Door!



Parvin (right) and her mother with MP Olivia Chow at the awards

### *In-Kind Needs*

**We are currently in need of baby items!**

**Diapers (Larger sizes 3-6)**

**Baby Wipes**

**Formula**

**Baby Food**



If you have items to donate or would like to put together a baby basket, please contact:

**[inkind@reddoorshelter.ca](mailto:inkind@reddoorshelter.ca)**



21 Carlaw Avenue  
Toronto, ON M4M 2R6  
Tel: 416-915-5671  
Fax: 416-915-5698  
[www.reddoorshelter.ca](http://www.reddoorshelter.ca)  
Charitable Registration  
11930 3287 RR0001