



**Couchiching
Jubilee House**

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CJH Newsletter
Spring 2015 Volume 26



Empowering Lives One by One

We are all in this together!

A Message from the Executive Director

Believing in the Community

I bring you “sunshine” greetings from Couchiching Jubilee House!

Since 2001 our doors have been open to 71 women and 87 children. It remains a supportive place to grow for women who are homeless or near homelessness in Simcoe County. As part of the coalition of transitional housing providers, CJH continues to believe in the importance of providing transitional housing to help women reclaim, recover and transform their lives, as they continue to work towards their own independence and reach their goals. I believe in a community that supports women empowering each other to reach their full potential and raise their children in a nurturing, safe and inspiring environment. This is why I am so excited to work in a community that has consistently supported the mission of CJH. It is with great thanks and appreciation from the bottom of our hearts that we as staff, board members, volunteers and our inspiring residents salute you each day.

You continue to be part of a movement of positive change and without you CJH could not continue to do what we do.

We look forward to your continued partnership with us! It's going to be a great year!

Akosua Atta-Mensah
Executive Director

From a Resident:

What Women's Empowerment Means To Me.



Woman's empowerment is so much more than feminism in a skirt.

More than a body to be exploited by the media and others who exploit women, given a false representation of what beauty should look like. More than a housewife or a working mom or a single mom or a single woman. Our choice to choose when we have children or whether we have them at all is up to us and we need not be judged by our decisions.

We are women united to teach each other our true worth in this world and for the next generations to come, that education is important for every woman worldwide without exception of race or religion or financial barriers.

That we deserve the right to be and feel safe regardless of what we choose to wear.

That rape culture is not ok and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. To say that she deserved it because of what she wore will be a thing of the past.

That we can love whoever we want despite sex, colour, or religion.

That we can work anywhere and do anything that men do and for the exact same pay. That we deserve to be respected and live free from the fear of violence and will recognize the signs of domestic violence and not be afraid to speak out and leave when necessary.

That we are there for each other and are there with open hearts and arms for our fellow sisters

Not being two faced and nasty and judgmental... taking each other at face value and respecting each other as sisters in this world geared towards men.

This is what empowering women means to me.

Message from the President:

As interim President of the Couchiching Jubilee House Board of Directors, I am pleased to be able to pass along some reflections of my own through this newsletter.

CJH has had a storied history of service to women in our community whose life circumstances brought them to our door, and through the commitment and diligence of our staff and amazing contingent of volunteers (both women and men), has been able to challenge, enrich and change those same lives. What began in its infancy as a program which focused exclusively on the four women in residence at the time, has now grown to embrace an ever-growing number of former residents or alumni. Though the priority of the program has always remained upon the current residents at any one time, our alumni numbers continue to increase.

The past two years have seen significant changes in our organization, unprecedented in the history of the program, but changes which herald some exciting new directions related primarily to staffing and program changes. We have a new team at the helm now, firmly anchored to take the program into the years ahead. Under the tutelage of our new Executive Director, we have approved some changes in program philosophy and direction to embrace the four key phases of our residents' journey through our program – Community Connections (referral and front-end program), Women Empowering Women (resident program), Moving On (post resident program), and Alumni. Our mission statement speaks to the issue of empowerment, a term which embodies our continuing philosophy to support independence and self-reliance, and our view is that these program streams will help to ensure our fulfillment of this mission.

Our plans for an alumni initiative bring with it much energy and excitement – the establishment of a formal alumni group for women who have moved through the program, and are now at a point where they can give back to current residents, recent post-residents and the community. To this end a recent decision of the Board will see one position now filled by a former resident to bring the valuable voice of personal experience to the table.

CJH has also been fortunate to have a Board of very dedicated and committed individuals over the years, each with particular skills and expertise in organizational governance, who are providing the direction during these pivotal times.

CJH is no longer just about providing a transitional home for women whose housing was at risk, but more about providing hope through a sustained network of support from our staff, our volunteers and the residents themselves.

As with any non-profit organization, CJH relies on support from the community to sustain its level of service, and it is so gratifying to see this support being maintained through the efforts of our fund-raising initiatives. For that we remain forever grateful.

CJH arose from the community, remains an integral part of the community, and through its services, continues to give back to the community. Please join us at the time of our Annual General Meeting in May to hear more about some of the changes ahead.

Brian R. Adams

Board of Directors

President: Brian Adams
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Couchiching Jubilee House Staff

Executive Director: Akosua Atta-Mensah
Program Coordinator: Tanika Chambers
Administrative Assistant: Rene Jacobson

Changes to Our Program Model - from the Executive Director

It's a brand new year with exciting changes!

I would like to introduce you to our new model for programs and service to provide you with a better sense of how your graciously donated dollars and hours of service are being used. We now have 4 phases of programming. Here are brief descriptions for each phase:

The first phase is known as **Community Connections-front-end program**: Community Connections (CC) is a supportive 8 week program which is delivered at the Orillia Public Library which brings together local community agencies serving women. Women have an opportunity to meet other women and service providers on a weekly basis and learn more about available resources.

The second phase is known as **Women Empowering Women-resident program**: Women Empowering Women (WEW) is a site-based program for our residents. Women can stay in residence for up to a year. Women participate in several workshops and lead a number of activities focused on building life skills.

The third phase is known as **Moving On-post-resident program**: Moving ON (MO) is a community based program which is run out of one of our local churches. Women who have moved on from the house meet on a weekly basis and continue to receive support and mentorship in their communities.

The fourth and final phase of programming is known as **Alumni**: Alumni members are graduates of the WEW and MO programs and are no longer receiving formal services through CJH. In fact they are giving back to their communities through board participation, networking, advocacy and mentorship.

CJH also offers free Children's Programming for the first 3 phases of our programming. Volunteers working in these areas come to us with a background in teaching and ECE.

Every year during our Christmas gathering a graduation ceremony will be held to recognize the achievements of our women and their children.

A Big Thank You to our Volunteers!

“Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.” Author Unknown

Special thanks to an outstanding group of volunteers who continue to give of their time, energy, skills, resources, and talents on a regular basis.

We truly could not have done it without your help in the following areas:

- Childcare and Programming
- Transportation
- Surveillance monitoring
- Providing support to our women
- Weekly Meals
- Apartment changeover
- Property maintenance

.... to name a few!

Thank you so much for all you do!!!



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Thank You to Faithworks, County of Simcoe and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their support

A Word From Our Program Coordinator

The Residence is getting a makeover!

On February 3rd, 2015 the residence of Couchiching Jubilee House went to work on what will eventually become their new common room area.

For many women living in transitional housing the common room area is known to be an open space for all residence to go and participate in house programming.

Through workshops and a wide range of activities our women will become equipped, empowered, inspired and motivated on a weekly basis to become their best selves for themselves and their children.

What makes this resident led empowerment project so unique and special is the fact that CJH has never had a common area like the one that is about to be created.

With the help of committed Volunteer Resident Support Workers and Property Volunteers the women of CJH will create a plan, shop for supplies and make what will become CJH history!

We are excited and look forward to seeing how this space will be transformed into a positive learning environment not only for themselves but, for the many other women who will walk through our doors.

Would you like to support the development of this project?
Gift certificates from the Home Hardware and Home Depot would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you so much for your support.

Tanika Chambers
Program Coordinator



The new common room colours chosen by the women in residence.

CJH Resident "Wish List" - Can you help out?

Toilet Paper
HE Laundry Soap
Dryer Sheets
Dish Soap
Garbage Tags

Kleenex
Bus Passes
YMCA Passes
Movie Passes
Thank you Cards

Gift Cards to:
Giant Tiger,
Metro
Walmart
Orillia Square Mall



Residence doing a great job of keeping the laundry room neat and tidy.



Congratulations to the staff and volunteers of CJH and partners for successfully completing safeTALK training. (suicide alertness for everyone) To learn more about safeTALK please visit www.livingworks.net

Signature Events and Fundraisers!

Great Shopping at the Fall Fashion Frenzy!



Silent Auction Table



Lakehead student volunteers
Kourtney, Jessica and Janette



Clothing items

December 2014 Dramatic Reading of Dicken's "A Christmas Carol"



Readers: Steve Clarke, Franco Bassoriello, Krista Storey, Rev. Karen Horst, Dr. Rob Town



Rev. Karen Horst



Presentation of scarves

DIVA DAY SHOWCASE 2015

*Celebrate the
10th Annual
Diva Day!*



Couchiching Jubilee House Presents

**Sunday, April 12
12:30 - 5:00 pm**

**BEST WESTERN Plus Mariposa Inn
and Conference Centre**

Tickets \$100 - only 100 available!

To become a Diva visit: Couchiching Jubilee House, 79 Colborne Street East, 9 - noon
or call: Jubilee House office, 705-326-4337 or email: cjhdivaday@gmail.com

*Save the Date
Call for tickets now!*

Major Giftors

"A big thank you to everyone who has supported the capital campaign we are pleased to announce that we expect that the mortgage on the house will be paid off in August 2015. To date we have 100% collection on pledges. This could not have been made possible without your generous support".

Special Thank you to the Following Major Giftors!

Irena Lawrenson
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We would also like to thank our Anonymous Donor for the incredibly generous gift of \$30,000.



**Couchiching
Jubilee House**

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