

sonscene

sonshine community services newsletter

SPRING 2010



Stories of Hope the case for second-stage

For over 25 years professionals in the domestic violence sector have been lobbying the government and raising awareness among the public about the need for more long-term (second-stage) shelters for women and children escaping domestic violence. In the last two years, we have seen

“If there were more second-stage housing available I think more women would not have to go back to their abusive partner or end up in another abusive relationship to meet their basic needs...”

momentum in this advocacy growing. In 2008 The Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters (ACWS) released an extensive report¹ proposing a new focus on second stage shelters to improve Alberta’s response to domestic violence. Citing recent research, they outlined the urgency of this challenge. Less than one year later, more research² was released by ACWS that demonstrates the great need for more second-stage shelters. This research made newspaper headlines, and slowly we see public awareness in this area growing and hope that the provincial government will see the need to provide core program funding to second stage shelters.

So why are second stage shelters so needed? Why the urgency? A recent graduate of the Sonshine Centre’s one-year residential program answers these questions for us as she tells

of her experience with domestic abuse.

“I had been in an abusive situation for seven years, and in the last two years I had been admitted into a local women’s emergency shelter three times. Sometimes there was not any space available so I would end up sleeping in my vehicle. I found that the local emergency shelter offered me twenty-one days, which answered my immediate need for shelter, but it did not allow me enough time to find permanent residence in a safe and secure area. Not only did I live with my abusive partner, I worked with him, so each time I left him I lost my home and my source of income. I needed more time to obtain housing and employment.

During my third stay at the local emergency shelter I applied to Sonshine and was accepted. Sonshine has given me one year of

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Thank You The Calgary Foundation

Sonshine would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to The Calgary Foundation for their support of the Sonshine Centre’s 2010 Volunteer and Community Engagement Program. A generous grant from The Calgary Foundation’s Community Grants Program is allowing Sonshine to offer meaningful volunteer opportunities to our community and caring volunteer support to the women and children at the Sonshine Centre.

>> News Bytes

Sonshine's on Facebook and Twitter!

Sonshine has joined the world of social media this year. You can join our Facebook Fan Page or follow us on Twitter by linking from our website – sonshine.ab.ca. We hope these tools will help you stay connected to our cause, volunteer opportunities, special events, and much more. Make sure to also check out the informative Facebook “notes” posted by our counseling, child care, and domestic violence experts.



Toe Tappin' Swing entertaining Hope Gala guests

Hope Gala Success

Sonshine's annual Hope Gala delighted over 200 attendees this past November. The event emceed by Darrel Janz raised approximately \$73,000 for the Sonshine Centre. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success. A special thanks to our event sponsors ConocoPhillips, Nexen, Crescent Point Energy, Investors Group, and Integrity Wealth Group. Thank you also to our printing sponsor Minuteman Press South Calgary, our graphic design sponsor Karla Smit Graphic Design, and our entertainment sponsor Toe Tappin' Swing. Save the date for Hope Gala 2010 – November 18, 2010!

Sonshine's Childrens' Dreams Take Flight

Five children at the Sonshine Centre got the chance of a life-time this past October when they were chosen to participate in a Dreams Take Flight trip to Disneyland. They joined 133 other children for an all expense paid trip to “The Happiest Place on Earth”. Our heartfelt thank you to Dreams Take Flight Calgary and Air Canada employees for giving these children this wonderful opportunity.



Children ready to fly to Disneyland

Sonshine Community Services is a community supported social service agency. We rely on the financial support of numerous groups and individuals who share our passion for delivering quality services to those in need. We welcome your tax-deductible donation.



Give Online
Sonshine.ab.ca



Give by Phone
403.243.2002



Give by Mail
P.O. Box 34067 RPO Westbrook
Calgary, AB T3C 3W2

Sonshine Community Services is a registered Canadian charitable organization, Registered Charity Business # 119156412RR0001. Our mission is to effectively deliver services from a Christian perspective that support the development of healthy individuals and families, assist in the building of respectful relationships, and respond to the needs of those experiencing family violence and abuse. We are incorporated under the Societies Act (Alberta). Sonshine expects to fundraise \$986,008 in 2010 at the cost of 9% of these funds. Gifts are acknowledged and receipted with an official receipt for income tax purposes. For further information, please contact Tania Evans, Resource Development Manager at 403.705.3485.

Men Making a Difference

Looking for Positive Male Role Models

“I want to learn to shave.” That’s what one of our clients recently heard from her preteen. “How do I teach him to shave?” she must have thought. “I know how to shave my legs, but my face!” Lost for how to answer her son’s request, she sought some advice from her counselor. Within a few days her counselor was talking to Sonshine’s volunteer coordinator to see if she could arrange for a male volunteer to come and have a “guys hang out time” where the volunteer could teach some of the preteen and teen boys how to shave, tie a tie, and of course have some manly food – pizza!



Our volunteer Shawn teaching boys at the Sonshine Centre how to tie a tie

Through this experience we realized how easily many of us can take for granted the presence of a father or positive male role model in our lives and the lives of the young boys in our families. Yet for the young boys and girls at Sonshine, the opportunity to learn, or even be around a trustworthy male is very rare. Many of them have only known violent men who did not respect them or their mothers. It is evident by the sheer delight the children at Sonshine express around our male volunteers that having positive male role models around is important to them.

In view of this, Sonshine has launched a male volunteer recruitment initiative. This initiative is part of Sonshine’s overall Volunteer and Community Engagement Program, which this year is generously funded in part by The Calgary Foundation. As part of this initiative, Sonshine will be recruiting male volunteers to take part in a wide range of volunteer opportunities, including outdoor sports, children’s play group, mentoring, construction, and more. Men can choose to volunteer by themselves, with friends, or with their families. For more information or to get involved, please contact Terry-Mae at 403.243.0274 or by email at thepburn@sonshine.ab.ca.

Give and “Shop ‘Til You Drop”

The Calgary Woman's Show

Sonshine is excited to have been chosen as The Calgary Woman’s Show spring 2010 “Charity of Choice.” As the charity of choice, Sonshine will be the recipient of fundraising and awareness activities, including free exhibit space and promotion at the event. We invite all our friends to come out to the show - April 24th and 25th, BMO Centre Stampede Park. Be sure to stop by our booth which will feature speciality coffee drinks by Cruising Café, as well as a fabulous Creative Memories card making station. A big thank you to The Calgary’s Woman’s Show, Cruising Café, and Creative Memories consultant Debbie for their support!

\$2 OFF ADMISSION

Come show your support for Sonshine!

Save \$2 off a \$13 admission when you present this coupon at the The Calgary Woman’s Show.

APRIL 24 AND 25, 2010

BMO Centre Stampede Park

Saturday 10am-6pm & Sunday 11am-5:30pm

calgarywomansshow.com


Sonshine
community services
spring 2010 charity of choice

Volunteer Highlight

Sarah Tanouye

The children at Sonshine know they can count on Sarah to greet them with a warm smile each Tuesday at children's group. Mothers know that they can comfortably go to their life-skills class, as



their children will be in Sarah's care. Sarah is one of Sonshine's most faithful and committed volunteers. Always willing to generously give of her time, Sarah participates in various volunteer activities. In addition to being a regular children's group volunteer, Sarah is also on Sonshine's Ambassador Team, which takes her to various fairs, tradeshow, and other events where she helps raise awareness about Sonshine. Sarah also plays an integral part in the planning committee of Sonshine's newest fundraising event *Sweet Hope*. And what does Sarah think about Sonshine? "Sonshine to me is magic," she says. "You help children develop into wonderful young people full of energy and wisdom, who gain the tools to improve not only themselves but their communities..." Thank you Sarah for your faithful and generous support of Sonshine!

Community Counseling Corner

self care, an often neglected component to mental health

Did you know that in the time it will take you to read this article you could do one thing to refresh yourself? How often do you say "I'm so tired, there is just not enough time," and then just keep going. I'm not going to suggest you do things that are unrealistic, so you never get to them. Instead here is a list of five things that will take three minutes or less. You can even do these things with your children because they will always need you when you try to take five minutes.

1. Poke your head out the door or a window and take three deep breaths.
2. Listen to one favourite song.
3. Make yourself a cup of tea or hot chocolate and concentrate on drinking it.
4. Smile at three people in a row.
5. Say hi to God, tell him how your day is going - He likes to chat.

Would you like to learn more about ways you can manage stress? Give the counselors at Sonshine Community Counseling a call. We would be happy to discuss this with you.

Sonshine Community Counseling provides individuals and couples in Calgary access to affordable, professional counselors who have experience with a wide range of emotional and relational issues. We also offer seminars and workshops for businesses, churches and organizations. Visit sonshine.ab.ca or call 403.705.3482.

Come Together to Give

Come together with others and help raise support and awareness for Sonshine. Consider hosting a party, concert, golf tournament, or other fun event in benefit of Sonshine. Contact Tania at 403.705.3485 or tevans@sonshine.ab.ca for more information.

Upcoming Benefit Events

Calgary Business Women - Home Business Shopping Event, Apr. 10
www.calgarybusinesswomen.com

What a Women Wants, What a women Needs - Consignment and Beauty Services Sale, Apr. 24
www.wawwwawn.weebly.com

Family Day Homes Corner

child nutrition and picky eaters

The staff at Sonshine Family Day Homes has over 60 years of experience in the child care industry. We enjoy using this experience to help day home providers as well as parents. Questions we've received from parents include: "When do I start potty training?" "I'm not sure if my child is talking enough at his age, what do I do?" "My child is a picky eater, how do I get him to eat more?"

We seem to get many nutrition questions, so let's explore this topic a little more. Parents want to make sure their children are eating enough of the right foods so they can grow up to be healthy and strong adults. We are bombarded with advertisements about baby foods, foods with all natural ingredients, Omega 3s, antioxidants, added fibre, and need we mention organics! So how is one to sift through all this information?

First, we recommend that you take your child to your doctor or health practitioner on a regular basis to make sure your child is growing within a healthy range. Your doctor can help alleviate most of your concerns. The Canada's Food Guide is also an excellent resource for anyone who is not sure how much they should be feeding their children. Visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.

So what about the child who doesn't want to eat? Children are much better than adults at listening to their bodies and knowing when they have eaten enough. If a child misses a meal or snack because they are not hungry, they will not starve and it will not hurt them. Children usually make it up by eating more at snack or the next meal. Some children are just not ready to eat a lot of food at 7 a.m. when they are being rushed out the door to child care or school. However, breakfast is the most important meal, so find time for your child to eat breakfast in a relaxed atmosphere. If you are in a rush and worried that they didn't eat enough breakfast, simply pack them a larger snack for school.

And what about the picky eater? Children's taste buds go through changes for most of their early and elementary years. There have been children who will only eat peanut butter sandwiches, then one day when you are preparing their usual sandwich you'll hear them say, "I don't like peanut butter." This is common and not something to worry about. Also keep in mind that children learn by example. If they see other children and adults eating a food that they don't like or have never tried, they are more likely to try it themselves. Eat different foods yourself and one day your child may surprise you and want to try it too.

Sonshine Family Day Homes has access to many child development resources available for parents and day home providers. We also hold education workshops every few months for parents and day home providers. To learn more about Sonshine Family Day Homes, visit sonshine.ab.ca or call one of our child care experts at 403.705.3476.



Coming June 18, 2010

sweet hope

Dessert-Theatre Charity Event

Featuring "Hockey Dad" by Burnt Thicket Theatre
Ticket Info at sonshine.ab.ca

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independent living which has allowed me time to find employment and find a safe area to reside which is affordable. The most beneficial part about the program was the counseling that I received during my one year stay. I had counseling on a weekly basis. My sessions with my one-on-one counselor helped me to deal with my long time emotional, mental and physical abuse, and it also helped me to plan and focus on future goals and housing. My group sessions taught me coping mechanisms and self awareness - behaviour patterns that had kept me in abusive relationships. They taught me how to recognize these and how to make safe and sound decisions.

Independent living allowed me a sense of freedom - I was not restricted as to what times I was available to work, which increased my availability to work, and therefore income to afford rent. I was truly fortunate to be accepted into Sonshine's program. There is very little second-stage housing available in Calgary and Alberta. Waiting to get into a second-stage program is a long wait. Even though first-stage is available, the stay is only twenty-one days. This may provide immediate shelter and maybe some time to find housing, but it does not allow time to deal with emotional issues. It does not allow time to teach coping mechanisms, stress management, anger management, setting healthy boundaries and learning to live within your limitations. Sonshine does all this. If there were more second-stage housing available I think more women would not have to go back to their abusive partner or end up in another abusive relationship to meet their basic needs or because they have not recognized a learned behaviour."

Works Cited

1. Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (2008). *Second Stage Shelters: Closing the Gap*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.acws.ca/documents/secondstageshelterstoolkitjuly292008final.pdf> [2010, March 4].
2. Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (2009). *Keeping Women Alive: Assessing the Danger*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.acws.ca/documents/KeepingWomenAlive.pdf> [2009, June 21].

Scotiabank Calgary Marathon

Join the Group Charity Challenge

Sonshine is excited to be participating in The Calgary Marathon's Scotiabank Group Charity Challenge. As an official charity of The Scotiabank Group Charity Challenge, Sonshine is recruiting individuals and families to join our Executive Director Joy Johnson-Green in running and raising funds for Sonshine. Discounted entry fees will be available to all runners raising funds for Sonshine, as well as a complimentary personalized fundraising webpage. Sonshine will receive every penny

you raise, as all administrative costs are being covered by Scotiabank!



The Scotiabank Calgary Marathon was voted the 2009 Best Road Race in Alberta. There is a race designed for everyone of any level, including a full marathon, half-marathon, 10 km, 5 km family walk or run and a kids' marathon. This is an excellent opportunity for families to be active and have fun together, while raising money for a great cause. Visit sonshine.ab.ca for more information and to link to Scotiabank's registration page. Questions can be directed to Tania Evans at 403.705.3485.

Be one of the first 10 people to register for Sonshine's team before April 15, and receive up to \$45 credit toward your registration fee.

Sonshine is looking for a local business or corporation to sponsor our Scotiabank Calgary Marathon team. Sonshine's team will sport t-shirts featuring our sponsor's name and logo. For more details on this sponsorship opportunity call Tania Evans at 403.705.3485