

Community Awareness

Join me in the “**She Deserves It**” campaign. Help us break the chains of abuse and know that every night women and children in our community will be safe because of your actions. These are women and children who won’t wake up to screaming and violence. Who won’t fall asleep terrified of what they’ll face the following day. Who won’t lie awake at night trying to think of ways they can hide their abuse from family and friends for yet another day. You will have made them safe. You will have given them a place to heal and rebuild their lives. The “**She Deserves It**” campaign highlights that she deserves to be safe. She deserves a shelter like Haven House.



Women's Crisis Services
of Waterloo Region

DAUGHTERS, NEIGHBOURS, COLLEAGUES, SISTERS, FRIENDS AND MOTHERS ARE AT RISK

Domestic abuse is happening right here, right now in Waterloo Region. All women and children deserve to be safe. Help us break the chains of abuse by rebuilding Haven House.

Did you know that Regional Police respond to over 6,100 domestic abuse incidents annually?

I would like to tell you about one of the most beautiful spots in Canada. It is right here in Waterloo Region but it isn't a scenic spot along the Grand River, Mennonite country in the height of autumn, or a historic favourite like the covered bridge in West Montrose.

The beautiful spot I'm talking about is a non-descript, vacant grass field in Cambridge. You could drive by it a hundred times and not recognize it as beautiful. This is the piece of land purchased by Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region to build a much needed shelter. A place where courageous women and their children, escaping abuse, will come to rebuild their lives.

We would like to pretend that we don't need another women's shelter in our community. We would like to block out the upsetting fact that many women and children live with abuse every day, right here in our own backyard. The fact remains that Regional Police respond to over **6,100 domestic abuse incidents** each year and

this number is just the tip of the iceberg because most women do not call the police. As shocking and unsettling as the statistics are, these are the facts.

The population growth rate in the Waterloo Region surpasses both the provincial and national averages. The Region is preparing for the increased numbers by investing in the ION rail system. What will the increased population mean for the already stretched women's services in our region? In 1991, the current Haven House in Cambridge was built as an 11 bed shelter. Now we find more than 30 women and children seek shelter at Haven House on any given night.

Children learn by what they see and mirror that behaviour. When a child grows up in a household of violence, they know no other norm. That IS what family life looks like to them, what relationships and parenting are modeled by. That IS how they believe that people deal with each other. Research shows that even babies who are exposed to violence in the home internalize it and it has an impact on their developing brains.

Through the critical education, counselling and therapy services offered by Women's Crisis Services, we can break these intergenerational patterns. You can help not only the thousands of women and children who come through the shelter, you can change the course of families for generations to come. Your giving will have a profound and lasting impact. They say it takes a village to raise a child. It's time for our village of Waterloo Region – our community – to stand up and help those who can't help themselves. It is time for us all to show mercy to people in our community. It is time to say that violence is not an option. Women and children deserve to be safe.

We need to build a new Haven House and we need to do it now. Please join me in building the new shelter on that beautiful piece of land I described earlier. This is a once in our lifetime opportunity to do something that will help not only thousands of women and children, but will also help to break the pattern of abuse that is passed down through families.

I've read that it is good practise to finish the day noting what we are grateful for – your gratitude list. I fall asleep grateful for the fact that the women and children served by Women's Crisis Services are safe.

We are looking for both personal and corporate support. To learn more about Women's Crisis Services and to donate today: Visit www.wcswr.org, Call (519) 741-9184 x2038 or Email admin@rebuildhavenhouse.org



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Chair of the Haven
House Campaign

Photographed with Mac, a gentle black lab. Thanks to a program partnership with the Humane Society, 'Healing Hearts,' Mac supports residents who are in crisis, often sitting with women when they first arrive at the shelter and making children feel calm and secure.