

EVERYONE
DESERVES A
LIFE WITHOUT
VIOLENCE.

HELP. HOPE. HEAL.

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FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP

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LISA'S STORY

Excerpts from "Changing lives with her story of hell." Published in ViBrant Magazine by Heather Rivers.

Lisa views her tumultuous life as a lesson for other women to learn from. "I want my story to change lives, to let others realize there is hope. I want other women to know there is help and there is freedom," she explained. "It's almost like it happened to me, to make me stronger."

Her story of domestic violence and sexual violence, alongside the pain of the suicide of her abused child, is one of incredible strength in the face of unspeakable tragedy and overwhelming adversity. "I'm at peace and I'm happy," she said. "I've escaped."

But she is still haunted by nightmares of a past life that began with all of the optimism the world can offer. A new husband, a new baby and a new life. Steve, who she once thought was her Prince Charming, was a quiet country boy.

But after they married, she knew that

life had changed drastically. "For the first year it was good, then I got pregnant and he really got jealous of the baby" she said, "He would say, 'put that baby down and spend time with me'"

He began to violently punish her for small things such as housekeeping issues or cooking food he didn't like. "He was mean, he beat me with a broom once for leaving dust on the dryer in the basement," she said. "There was constant fear, I was constantly walking on egg shells."

She learned to wear baggy clothes to both hide her bruises and to ward off his sexual advances. "I never charged him with assault, I was too afraid," she said.

It was about this time that Lisa began to develop a relationship that would mentor her and help her survive through what was to come. Lisa contacted Nova Vita, a Brantford shelter dedicated to stopping the cycle of domestic violence.

"I would go in and talk to them, they told me we are here for you if you want to leave (your husband)," she said. "They were so supportive."

Lisa eventually left her husband after enduring years of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. After medications and some counselling, she continued

on, and today she is telling her story as a way of healing.

"I didn't end up in a psych ward like I should have due to a couple of good friends and Nova Vita, they helped a lot," she said.

Meanwhile, Lisa, who has decided to continue her education, has been accepted into a Masters program for counselling. "I want to help hurting women and children, especially young women," she said.

At Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services, we continue to offer diverse counselling programs and support services to help women like Lisa. Due to fiscal restraints, Nova Vita struggles to maintain all the services that are needed for the women and children who depend on them.

With your help, we can ensure that no one has to live a life of violence, that Nova Vita will be there to offer help, hope and healing.

Please consider donating today. Simply fill out the donation card supplied in this newsletter or visit our website at www.novavita.org.

We appreciate your support and generosity.



novavita

30 years of help, hope and healing

On a warm day back on June 1, 1983, a mother holding the hands of her two small children, stepped through the doorway at the renovated house on Chatham Street. The sign above the door said Nova Vita (Latin for NEW LIFE) Women's Shelter. Her hope was to start a new life one that was free of domestic violence.

The shelter was a transition house with the primary focus of providing emergency housing, counselling and support to abused women and their children.

As Brantford and the surrounding area became more populated the need for services also grew. By 1995, Nova Vita Women's Shelter had outgrown their quarters and moved to the present day location at 59 North Park Street.

There are many stories remembered by counsellors about their former clients. One counsellor recalled a situation in which the counsellor assumed the worst.....

"I remember a woman who attended our group counselling sessions. She was in an abusive relationship for

some time and the descriptions of their home life were heart wrenching. One intense encounter with her husband occurred on a very cold day - even the living room windows were frosted up. At one point, she noticed that one of her children - (probably in a desperate attempt to attract the attention of a passerby) - had traced something on the window through the frost. It read "HELP US".

Although she worried constantly about how the abuse was affecting her children, she didn't believe she could care for them adequately on her own if she left her husband. She felt completely "stuck".

About two years after she left the group, we received a letter from her. She had moved to a new community with her children, had upgraded her education and was managing well.

Although it had taken her some time to arrive at the decision to leave, she reported that it was ultimately prompted by something that was said during the Nova Vita counselling sessions.

In 2003, Nova Vita saw the comple-

tion of an 10,000 sq. ft. addition and renovation of our facility. It included an additional 12 emergency beds bringing the total number of beds to 30. Within one day of opening the new section - it too, was full.

After years of planning, in 2007 Maria House was opened, an eight unit transitional housing complex designed to assist women to transition into new violence free lives. Counselling, life skills training and referrals to other community resources are among the transitional support services available to these residents.

Maria House was named after Maria Hacking, a dedicated employee who gave more than 20 years of compassionate service to Nova Vita. Maria, is truly missed by all.

This year marks 30 years of offering help, hope and healing to over 18,000 women, children and men. Our services have grown immensely; from an emergency shelter only, to a multi-service organization offering programs to victims, perpetrators and children. We take pride in being one of the few women's organizations that embraces

THE EXPOSITOR

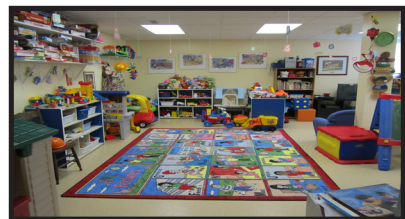
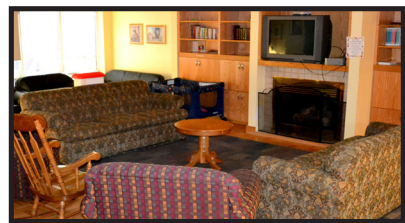
BRANTFORD AND AREA FOR OVER 158 YEARS



30 years continued.....

the whole family in the quest for violence free lives.

At Nova Vita their is still much work to do to ensure all families live a healthy violence free life. Through education and prevention services we believe we can minimize the impact of violence within our community.



Programs offered at Nova Vita:

- 24 Hour Crisis Line
- 30 bed emergency shelter
- Transitional Support for safety; planning; referrals to community resources; accompaniment to court, lawyers & appointment; advocacy with social services, counselling
- Community Counselling for Women over the age of 16 who are in or have been in abusive relationships
- Children Exposed to Domestic Violence, group counselling for children aged 4-16
- Caring Families helping parents realize the impact of violence on their kids
- Challenge to Change is for at risk men and women who benefit from learning how to stop abuse – the Partner Check Program ensures the safety of their partners
- MIM, Mothers in Mind focuses on mothers of children aged 0-6 who have experienced trauma and abuse in their lives
- Art therapy provides women with a different forum to explore their emotions and gain personal insights
- Teen Dating Violence Prevention presentations offered in local high schools.
- WOW, Women of Wisdom offers group counselling to senior women who have endured years of abuse.

Men in Heels

On Saturday June 22nd, 100 men from all walks of life got together to sport red high heels in support of abused women and their children.

It wasn't just families and friends attending the event, but local clubs and groups of men showing their support.

A group of First Nations men comes to the walk every year to show the devotion they have to helping women. "It's what we need to do as men to protect women," Doug Henhawk said.

Together these compassionate men raised over \$27,000 for Nova Vita.



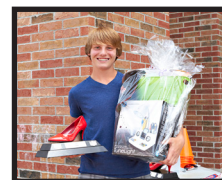
KEVIN MAGEE \$2,885
TOP INDIVIDUAL



THE PIRATES \$3,345
TOP TEAM



BCI STUDENTS \$800
TOP SCHOOL



ANDREW KITCHEN \$80
TOP YOUTH

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WALKERS AND SPONSORS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY - WE TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

Closet Couture

Closet Couture, in Brantford is a beautiful boutique filled with carefully selected, like-new brand name, designer clothes and accessories at great prices! And, best of all, while you shop in style, proceeds from the sale of merchandise go to support the homeless and abused women and their children at Nova Vita. Closet Couture is Nova Vita's first social enterprise.

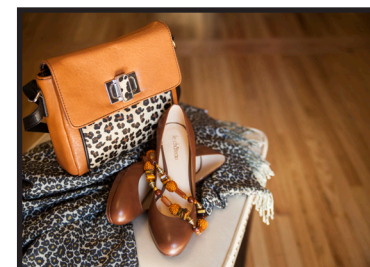
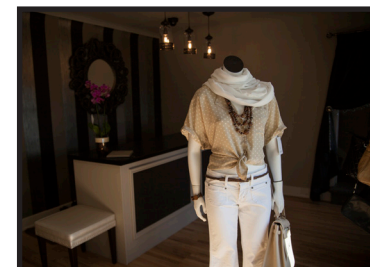
Each year, Nova Vita provides services to hundreds of women and their children with limited financial resources and ever increasing demands for services. In 2012 Nova Vita provided services to 159 women and 146 children. Simply put, we are always full.

By opening Closet Couture, Nova Vita is able to convert clothing donations into much needed funds to support our cutting edge programs.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, Nova Vita is able to ensure that all of Nova Vita's clients (women and children) receive the clothing they need to make a successful transition to a violence free lifestyle and support Closet Couture boutique.

This social enterprise will continue to give back to Nova Vita and the community for years to come.

Our success depends on your generosity and support - if you would like to donate your clean gently used or new clothing please drop off your donation to Nova Vita at 59 North Park Street **Monday - Friday between 9:00AM - 4:30PM. We apologise, we are unable to accept donations over the weekend.**



IWD 2014

In October, nominations for our 2014 Woman of Excellence Award will be accepted. The award will be presented at our 5th Annual International Women's Day Event on Wednesday March 5th, 2014. If you know an exceptional woman in our community who is deserving of this honour we encourage you to nominate her. To do so, visit our web site in October at www.novavita.org.

Sharon Brooks, our 2013 Woman of Excellence Award Winner.



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